

Newsletter of the Council on Anthropology and Reproduction

Volume 23, Issue 2



Caption: Photo of a Born House celebration for a new baby, held in Berlin in a rented hall. Members of the sponsoring hometown association perform a dance, reminding the baby that she is part of a community. Thus, the ceremony is an important element linking belonging to reproductive practices in this immigrant community. In Cameroon, the celebration would have been held in the parent's home, but apartments are too small in Berlin, and neighbors might complain about the noise. *From Pamela Feldman-Savelsburg*

Meeting Announcement: AAA 2016

Please join us at the annual conference of the American Anthropological Association

When: November 16-20, 2016

Where: Minneapolis, MN

Please look at the full conference program to find more panels and papers related to reproductive health!

Advocacy

Ad hoc advocacy committee on
Carework in the Academy

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AAA Meeting Guide

AAA Panels submitted by
Members

Pages 5 and 6

Notes from the Field

Read about experiences and
observations from ongoing
fieldwork

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CAR Business Meeting in Minneapolis

From Jan Brunson, Chair: I hope your semesters and fall are off to an excellent start. I wanted to let everyone know about the timing of our CAR business meeting at the AAA meetings in Minneapolis so that you can put it on your calendars. **CAR Business Meeting: Saturday, Nov 19th at 12:15.** Please bring prospective members, students, babies, lunch, whatever it takes to get you there. I look forward to seeing you!

The certificates for the CAR Book Award and Graduate Student Paper Prize will be awarded at the **SMA Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony: Friday, Nov 18th 7:45-9:00 pm.** A reception and cash bar will follow.

Advocacy & Book Award

The Carework in the Academy Ad hoc Advocacy Committee

In 2016, CAR members Sallie Han and Jill Fleuriet began The Carework in the Academy (CA) ad hoc advocacy committee. The ad hoc committee developed out of an AAA-wide initiative with the same title. The AAA CA initiative's goal is to combat professional and economic inequities faced by academics who are also primary caregivers. Sallie and Jill are principals of the CA initiative along with Rebecca Galemba (CoGEA) and Nikky Greer (PhD student, Temple U). The CAR ad hoc advocacy committee serves as formal recognition of support by CAR for the CA initiative and to serve as the AAA anchor for the initiative.

Since its inception in April 2016, the CA ad hoc advocacy committee, along with R. Galemba and N. Greer, has accomplished the following: designed the CA website, which includes a Resources pages and an online questionnaire to gather academics-caregivers experiences. The website will be live once all Institutional Review Board protocols are approved. Fleuriet, Galemba and Han also spearheaded the organization of the CoGEA and CLR roundtables on academics-caregivers and intersections with gender, kinship and contingent labor. The roundtables will be held on Thursday, November 17, from 8 AM – 12 PM. At the roundtables and the CAR business meeting, we look forward to hearing ideas for our next steps in the CA initiative.



BOOK AWARD 2016

On behalf of the Council on Anthropology and Reproduction Book Prize Committee, I am happy to announce that the edited collection, *Reproduction and Biopolitics: Ethnographies of Governance, "Irrationality" and Resistance*, edited by Silvia De Zordo and Milena Marchesi, has been selected as the winner of this year's **Most Notable Recent Collection in Anthropology and Reproduction Book Award**.

Reproduction and Biopolitics: Ethnographies of Governance, "Irrationality" and Resistance.

Silvia De Zordo and Milena Marchesi, editors. Routledge, 2014. For more on the book see <https://www.routledge.com/Reproduction-and-Biopolitics-Ethnographies-of-Governance-Irrationality/De-Zordo-Marchesi/p/book/9781138803220>

Silvia De Zordo is a Postdoctoral Beatriu de Pinós Fellow at the University of Barcelona, Spain. She is a social anthropologist with over ten years of research experience on health, gender and reproduction in Latin America and Europe. Her current research focuses on abortion and conscientious objection in Europe

Milena Marchesi is a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Massachusetts, USA. She is a social anthropologist whose work focuses on reproduction, migration, gender and the family, and neoliberalism in Italy.

From the committee: We commend the editors and contributors: The judges found this book to be an excellent contribution to the fields of anthropology and reproduction. "This is a fascinating collection of seven chapters that addresses irrational/rational reproduction in various places around the world (Poland, Italy, Brazil, Pakistan, Latin America). It is theoretically rich and ethnographically grounded." It is engaging, readable, and cohesive, and serves as a reminder of the significance of biopower and biopolitics in feminist analyses of reproduction. The editors make "a clear and deliberate effort to engage reproductive discourse and policies across these chapters and they clearly belong together, and gain strength in their cohesiveness theoretically." The chapters resonate with other work in the anthropology of reproduction and demonstrate the ways in which these issues continue to be relevant.

News & Announcements

Please see the following announcements from Robbie Davis-Floyd:

Robbie Davis-Floyd would like to call attention to an Annotated Bibliography on works in the anthropology of reproduction, which she had been creating for years until she turned it over to CAR last year. It is now available on the CAR website with many works now added by others. Please feel free to make use of it as you wish and please **ADD TO IT** any new publications, yours or any others that you deem worthy of inclusion! Here is the link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/17GJD6lQh7CoJVRdRPaZAoET7WD74aKElcNrK8hZ7Eao/edit>

Robbie is also delighted to announce that she is close to completing an anthology of her most-read articles spanning the course of her anthropological career. She has thoroughly revised and updated all included articles to become chapters in the anthology, which is primarily intended for teaching in the social sciences and in midwifery and medical education programs, and added a series of Thought and Discussion Questions at the end of each chapter, as well as recommendations for videos that can be used to accompany the chapter and illustrate its points. The anthology is tentatively entitled *Ways of Knowing about Birth: Midwives, Medicine, and Birth Activism*, and will be published by Waveland Press in the Spring of 2016. **PLEASE NOTE:** If you have recommendations for films to include that you find particularly useful for teaching, please send them to Robbie at davis-floyd@austin.utexas.edu.

Davis-Floyd continues to serve as Editor for the *International MotherBaby Childbirth Initiative (IMBCI): 10 Steps to Optimal Maternity Care*, which is increasingly being adopted as the template for optimal birth practices around the world, from small individual midwifery practices to large-scale hospitals. Please visit imbc.org for the full text of the IMBCI and for information about the webinars currently being offered monthly on each of the 10 Steps. For an outstanding description of how the IMBCI can be implemented even in a disaster zone in a tent with no electricity and no running water, see Vicki Penwell's recent article "How a Checklist Promotes Human Rights in Childbirth: The International MotherBaby Childbirth Initiative" (*Midwifery Today* Issue 119:pp.40-44). And please sign on as a supporter of the IMBCI at www.imbc.org.

Internship Opportunity for Students

Robbie Davis-Floyd offers live-in internships starting in February 2017 to students who wish to come to her home in Austin, Texas for periods from two weeks to several months to work on projects in the anthropology of reproduction; these can range from simply seeking an initial introduction to the field to a kind of "writer's retreat" to focus on their Master's theses, PhD dissertations, articles, or books with Robbie's help and mentorship. She is also available to design and mentor Independent Study courses for credit in a student's own college or university tailored to the student's particular interests. Interested students can contact her at davis-floyd@austin.utexas.edu.

AAA Panel Guide

Friday

Robbie Davis-Floyd has organized a panel at the upcoming AAA's called "Back to the Basics of Birth" as a means of bringing together the authors for a new collection called *Birth in Seven Cultures: A Cross-Cultural Investigation*. Working closely with Brigitte Jordan (recently deceased), Robbie completely revised and updated Jordan's classic work *Birth in Four Cultures*, which has been used widely for teaching since its publication in 1993. This new volume is specifically designed to carry forward Jordan's work in combination with that of Davis-Floyd, along with new birth ethnography by some of the best anthropologists in the field. Part 1 of the book will include a history of the anthropology of birth (by Robbie Davis-Floyd and Carolyn Sargent) and an evolutionary look at birth practices (called "Birth and the Big Bad Wolf" by Davis-Floyd and Melissa Cheyney). The four chapters in Part 2 will each compare birth in two cultures: The U.S. (Melissa Cheyney) and the Netherlands (Bahar Gudarzi, Treesje Wieggers), Brazil (Eliza Williamson) and Japan (Etsuko Matsuoka), Greece (Nia Georges) and New Zealand (Rea Dallenbach). In homage to Jordan, one chapter (Vania Smith-Okia and Lydia Zacher) will focus exclusively on Mexico, where Gitti carried out most of her fieldwork; this chapter will compare and contrast the three very disparate cultures of medicine and traditional and professional midwifery. We urge you to attend our **AAA session, scheduled for Friday afternoon**, and to expect publication of the book in the Spring or Fall of 2017.

ARTICULATING HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPRODUCTIVE GOVERNANCE: ETHNOGRAPHIC ENGAGEMENTS IN TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (4-0005)

Society for Medical Anthropology

Friday, November 18 8:00 AM - 9:45 AM

Organizer(s): Mounia El Kotni, *State University of New York, Albany*

Chair(s): Elyse Singer, *University of Washington St. Louis* Discussant(s): Jan Brunson, *University of Hawai'i at Manoa*

Presentations: Governing Adolescent Reproduction in New York City: Situating Public Health Strategy and Clinical Practices

Assisted Reproductive Technologies Vs. Abortion Laws: Defining Human Rights in the Polish "in Vitro" Policy Debate

Claiming Rights to Resist State-Sponsored Midwifery Trainings: Indigenous Midwives Organize in Chiapas, Mexico

Who Is Entitled to Obstetric Services? Post-Abortion Care, Hospital Data and Reproductive Governance in Senegal

Invoking the Human Right to Abortion in Mexico: Feminist Approaches within and Around the Nation-State

Obstetric Violence As a Human Rights Framework to Analyze Discrimination in a Highly Inequitable Setting: The Case of the Dominican Republic

Discussant: Jan Brunson

Saturday

RACE AND REPRODUCTION (5-0420)

Association for Feminist Anthropology

Saturday, November 19 10:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Organizer(s): Ellie Hamrick, *City University of New York, The Graduate Center*; Ishan Gordon, *City University of New York, The Graduate Center*

Chair(s): Christa Craven, *College of Wooster*

Discussant(s): Christa Craven, *College of Wooster*

Presentations:

Reproducing the Nation: Silencing African Heritage in Chile

From Reproducers of Poverty to Global Markets: Gestational Surrogacy in Puerto Rico

Race and Feminist Approaches to Self-Administered Abortion in the US

Race and Reproduction in U.S. Women's Prisons

Sexual Panic: Reproductive Justice in Black Nicaragua

TITS: ACCIDENT, TRANSGRESSION, AND MILK IN A CYBORG ERA, PART I (5-0975)

Society for Medical Anthropology

Saturday, November 19 4:00 PM - 5:45 PM

Organizer(s): Beatriz Reyes-Foster, *University of Central Florida*; Adrienne Pine, *American University*

Chair(s): Beatriz Reyes-Foster, *University of Central Florida* Discussant(s): Penny Van Esterik, *York University, Canada*

AAA Panel Guide (cont.)

Presentations:

Cyborg Subjectivities and Speaking Machines: Exploring Narratives of Exclusive Pumping

Accidental Transgressions: Breastfeeding and Bedsharing in the U.S

“Feeding Shame: Value and the Meaning of Milk for Families of Disabled Children in the Urban American South”

Tits, Transgression and Tenure

TITS: ACCIDENT, TRANSGRESSION, AND MILK IN A CYBORG ERA, PART II (6-0115)

Society for Medical Anthropology

Sunday, November 20 8:00 AM - 9:45 AM

Chair(s): Adrienne Pine, *American University* Discussant(s): Aunchalee Palmquist, *Elon University*

Presentations:

Accident and Transgression in Eschewing Formula Marketing: Enforcing Code Compliance Among Breastfeeding Support Providers

Breastfeeding – an Exception or Transgression?

“Hearts on Fire”: Milk-Sharing, Milk-Selling and Transgression in a Central Florida Peer Milk-Sharing Community

Breastfeeding, Breast-Pumping, and Milk Sharing: Resisting Dependency through Milk Solidarity in Cabo Verde

Sunday

MANAGING CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE SELF IN CHILDBIRTH AND CHILDLESSNESS

Scheduled Date: Sunday, November 20, 2016 Time: 10:15 AM-12:00 PM (10:15-10:30 AM)

Chair: Lauren Jean Wallace (McMaster University)

Family Planning and Biocitizenship in Northern Ghana, Lauren Jean Wallace (McMaster University)

Member Publications

Articles and Book Chapters:

Nia Georges and Robbie Davis-Floyd are happy to announce the publication of their article “**Humanistic Obstetrics in Brazil: A Revolution in Maternity Care**” in *The Routledge Handbook of Medical Anthropology*, eds. Lenore Manderson, Anita Hardon, and Elizabeth Cartwright. London and New York: Routledge. We heartily recommend this outstanding collection—please ask your libraries to order it and include it in your relevant syllabi!

Claire Wendland has a chapter out,

Wendland, Claire L. 2016 **Estimating death: a close reading of maternal mortality metrics in Malawi**. In *Metrics: What Counts in Global Health*. V. Adams, ed. Pp. 57-81. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. This chapter is a careful look at how the statistical models for estimating maternal mortality are made, what assumptions are built into them, and what political effects they have—drawing from some of her ethnographic work in Malawi.

The Handbook of Gestational Surrogacy: International Clinical Practice and Policy Issues, published by Cambridge University Press, is going to be released on Oct. 6th in the UK and about 4-6 weeks later in the US. <https://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Gestational-Surrogacy-International-Clinical/dp/1107112222>

Zsuzsa Berend wrote an empirical chapter for the book, “The Emotion Work of a ‘Labor of Love’” and suggests this volume may be useful for teaching purposes or even just for orientation about practices and policies.

Member Publications (cont.)

Articles and Book Chapters cont.

Fouzieyha Towghi (2016) "The Re-colonization of South Asian Women's Bodies: Normalizing Off-Label Experiments in Pharmaceuticalization of Homebirths." In *Negotiating Normativity: Postcolonial Appropriations, Contestations and Transformations*, edited by N. Dhawan, E. Fink, J. Leinius & R. Mageza-Barthe. Springer, US.

Holly Singh: "Fertility Control: Reproductive Desires, Kin Work, and Women's Status in Contemporary India," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* DOI: 10.1111/maq.12312. Early view: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/maq.12312/full>

Holly Singh "Patriarchy, Privilege, and Power: Intimacies and Bargains in Ethnographic Production," *Anthropology & Humanism* 41(1): 8-27. DOI: 10.1111/anhu.12104 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/anhu.12104/full>

Michelle Walks: Transmasculine individuals' experiences with lactation, chestfeeding, and gender identity: a qualitative study <http://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-016-0907-y> This was part of an interdisciplinary, community-based research project that was funded through CIHR-IGH (Canadian Institute of Gender and Health, Institute of Gender and Health).

Photo essay

Adrienne Strong recently published a photo essay on the public anthropology platform SAPIENS.org about her research on maternal mortality in Tanzania. <http://www.sapiens.org/culture/maternal-death-rate-tanzania/>

Books

Robbie Davis-Floyd is happy to announce the publication of two books in 2016:

Davis-Floyd, Robbie and Charles Laughlin. 2016. *The Power of Ritual*. Brisbane, Australia: Daily Grail Press. This co-authored volume explains what ritual is, how it works, and the effects it can produce in the world and in people's psyches. It deals not with ritual theory but with ritual itself, outlining the major characteristics from whence its power derives. It is intended both for teaching and for the interested lay reader. Its contents will change readers' perspectives on ritual, provide them with a deep understanding of this cultural universal, and show them how to put the power of ritual to work in their own lives. Available from amazon.com.

Hass, Robyn and Robbie Davis-Floyd eds. 2016. *Surviving the Death of an Ex: Managing the Grief No One Talks About*. Praeclarus Press. This collection contains moving stories of women who have had to deal with the deaths of their ex-husbands and the multiple ensuing complications, including unresolved issues that now never can be resolved for themselves and often their children. Some of the essays were written in the immediate aftermath of the ex's death; these poignantly demonstrate strong and mixed emotions and the authors' struggles to cope. Other authors write with the benefit of years of reflection and have valuable advice to offer. The book also contains an Appendix written by Robbie called "The Art of Grieving Gracefully" and a list of support services.

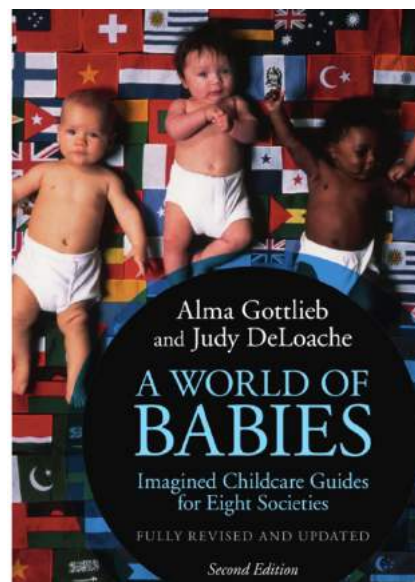
Member Publications (cont.)

Also forthcoming, from the University of California Press in 2017, is *Birth Models That Work Volume II: Birth Models on the Global Frontier*, coedited by Betty-Anne Daviss and Robbie Davis-Floyd. This collection will contain descriptions of cutting-edge models of birth practice in both developed and developing countries in circumstances that range from extreme poverty to complicated political situations to war zones.

From Alma Gottlieb and Judy DeLoache:

The brand-new, second edition of *A World of Babies* is now available! (from Cambridge U Press

<http://www.cambridge.org/aworldofbabies>) The new edition retains the creative format of the first-imagined childcare manuals based on solid ethnographic data-but updates it for the 21st century. The book also has a dedicated Facebook page (“A World of Babies”) that will have daily updates through the fall: <https://www.facebook.com/WOBBook/> The Amazon page is here: <https://www.amazon.com/World-Babies-Imagined-Childcare-Societies/dp/1316502570>

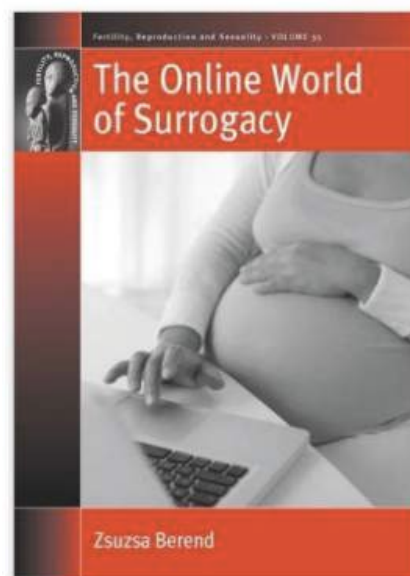


From Zsuzsa Berend:

My book, *The Online World of Surrogacy*, is going to be published by Berghahn Book on Sept. 30, 2016. I'm happy to spread the news! I worked on this research for about a decade, following threads on a major online surrogacy support and information site, SMO. The result is an ethnography of this online world. It provides rich data about and analysis of how women who become surrogates discuss issues important to them (rather than the researcher), how they debate, define, and redefine what a 'good surrogate' is and how their sustained discussions shaped the practice of surrogacy in the US.

Find it on www.amazon.com

NOTE: By the way, I'd be happy if people complained to Berghahn about the price... and demand the paperback edition

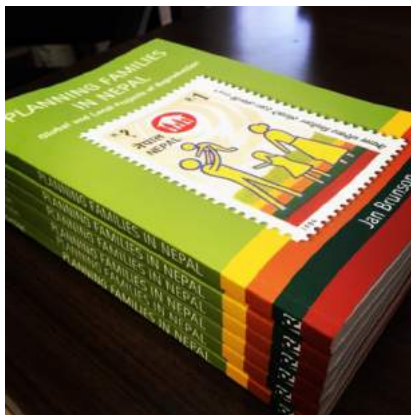


Member Publications (cont.)

From Jan Brunson: Based on almost a decade of research in the Kathmandu Valley, *Planning Families in Nepal* offers a compelling account of Hindu Nepali women as they face conflicting global and local ideals regarding family planning.

Promoting a two-child norm, global family planning programs have disseminated the slogan, “A small family is a happy family,” throughout the global South. Jan Brunson examines how two generations of Hindu Nepali women negotiate this global message of a two-child family and a more local need to produce a son. Brunson explains that while women did not prefer sons to daughters, they recognized that in the dominant patrilocal family system, their daughters would eventually marry and be lost to other households. As a result, despite recent increases in educational and career opportunities for daughters, mothers still hoped for a son who would bring a daughter-in-law into the family and care for his aging parents. Mothers worried about whether their modern, rebellious sons would fulfill their filial duties, but ultimately those sons demonstrated an enduring commitment to living with their aging parents. In the context of rapid social change related to national politics as well as globalization—a constant influx of new music, clothes, gadgets, and even governments—the sons viewed the multigenerational family as a refuge.

Throughout *Planning Families in Nepal*, Brunson raises important questions about the notion of “planning” when applied to family formation, arguing that reproduction is better understood as a set of local and global projects that involve actors with desires and actions with constraints, wrought with delays, stalling, and improvisation.



From Daisy Deomampo: *Transnational Reproduction: Race, Kinship, and Commercial Surrogacy in India* (New York University Press 2016)

Transnational Reproduction traces the relationships among Western aspiring parents, Indian surrogates, and egg donors from around the world. In the early 2010s India was one of the top providers of surrogacy services in the world. Drawing on interviews with commissioning parents, surrogates, and egg donors as well as doctors and family members, Daisy Deomampo argues that while the surrogacy industry in India offers a clear example of “stratified reproduction”—the ways in which political, economic, and social forces structure the conditions under which women carry out physical and social reproductive labor—it also complicates that concept as the various actors in this reproductive work struggle to understand their relationships to one another.

The book shows how these actors make sense of their connections, illuminating the ways in which kinship ties are challenged, transformed, or reinforced in the context of transnational gestational surrogacy. The volume offers a robust and nuanced understanding of race and power as

Member Publications (cont.)

ideas about kinship intersect with structures of inequality. It demonstrates that while reproductive actors share a common quest for conception, they make sense of family in very different ways. In doing so, it uncovers the specific racial reproductive imaginaries that underpin the unequal relations at the heart of transnational surrogacy.

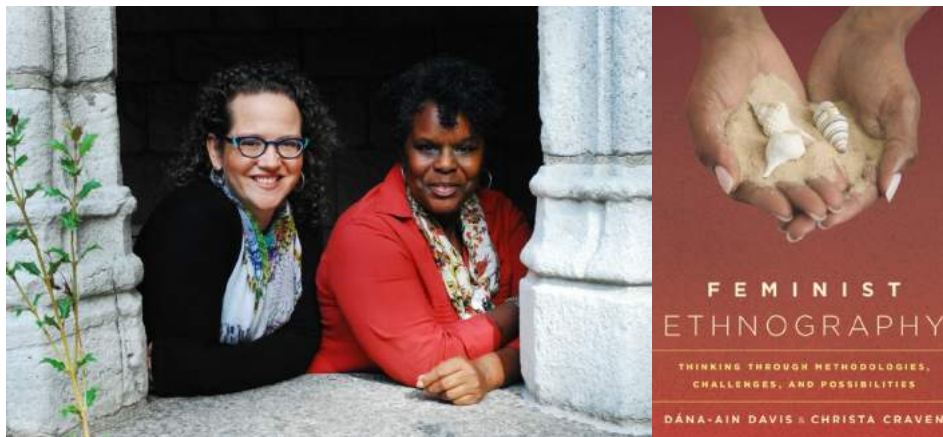
From Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg: *Mothers on the Move: Reproducing Belonging between Africa and Europe* (University of Chicago Press, 2016) tells the story of Cameroonian migrants in Germany through the lives of women who navigate belonging—in Europe and in Africa—by birthing and caring for children. Presenting vivid case studies of encounters among Cameroonian mothers and children, government bureaucrats, and humanitarian service providers, the book explores the strength and tenuousness of these connections. To have and keep their children, Cameroonian mothers switch on and off emotionally-laden network ties with husbands, kin, co-ethnics, co-nationals, and German state and NGO workers. These networks require careful management, simultaneously facilitating the exchange of support and goods while contributing to women's insecurity through the possibility of gossip and exposure to the “shadow” of state regulations.

CAR members will be particularly interested in material on finding partners, childbirth, and the embodiment of belonging in infant care (Ch 3), childrearing (Ch 4), children's involvement in migrant associational life (Ch 5), and state interventions regarding infant bodily care (male circumcision) and citizenship-through-childbearing (Ch 6). Vivid scenes—at a hometown association's year-end festival, a celebration for a new baby, a school-starting party, and many others—enliven our thinking about migrant mothers' and children's lives and the networks and repertoires that they draw on to find stability and, ultimately, belonging. Placing women's individual voices within international social contexts, this book unveils the dreams, frustrations, uncertainties, and resolve of strong women holding families together across continents, offering an uplifting account of African migrants as mothers.

The book will be out and available at the Book Exhibit of the AAA in Minneapolis (and also at the African Studies Association in D.C.). **See page 11 for the discount flyer!**

From Christa Craven: Dána-Ain Davis & Christa Craven (2016) *Feminist Ethnography: Thinking Through Methodologies, Challenges, and Possibilities*

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9780759122451/Feminist-Ethnography-Thinking-through-Methodologies-Challenges-and-Possibilities> The book contains a number of references to the anthropology of reproduction!



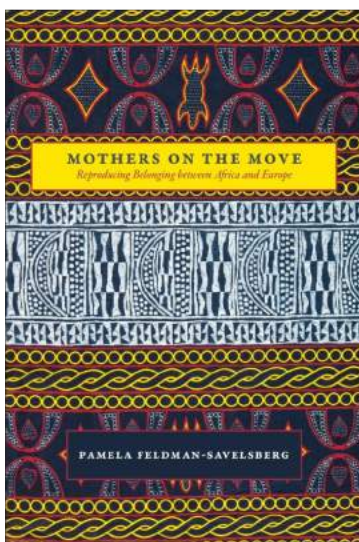
Member Publications (cont.)

Mothers on the Move

Reproducing Belonging between Africa and Europe

Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg

November 2016



“A sensitive, well-grounded, and beautifully written study of the dilemmas immigrant mothers face when they migrate and the social strategies and community resources they mobilize in handling those conflicts.”

Cati Coe, author of *The Scattered Family*

“In a wonderful book full of rich and compelling ethnographic cases, Feldman-Savelsberg tells the story of Cameroonian migrants in Germany through the lives of women who navigate belonging—in Europe and in Africa—through birthing and caring for children. Without sugarcoating the challenges that these women face, *Mothers on the Move* presents a refreshingly uplifting account of African migration, offering a welcome corrective to the predominant focus on abjection. International migrants commonly frame their motivations to move in terms of providing better lives for their children. This book develops a much-needed and highly insightful perspective on migrants as mothers.”

Daniel Jordan Smith, author of *AIDS Doesn't Show Its Face*

The massive scale and complexity of international migration today tends to obscure the nuanced ways migrant families seek a sense of belonging. In this book, Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg takes readers back and forth between Cameroon and Germany to explore how migrant mothers—through the careful and at times difficult management of relationships—juggle belonging in multiple places at once: their new country, their old country, and the diasporic community that bridges them.

Feldman-Savelsberg introduces readers to several Cameroonian mothers, each with her own unique history, concerns, and voice. Through scenes of their lives—at a hometown association's year-end party, a celebration for a new baby, a visit to the Foreigners' Office, and many others—as well as the stories they tell one another, Feldman-Savelsberg enlivens our thinking about migrants' lives and the networks and repertoires that they draw on to find stability and, ultimately, belonging. Placing women's individual voices within international social contexts, this book unveils new, intimate links between the geographical and the generational as they intersect in the dreams, frustrations, uncertainties, and resolve of strong women holding families together across continents.

280 pages | 6 x 9 | © 2016

Paper Price: ~~\$30.00~~ \$24.00 | ISBN-13: 978-0-226-38988-2



The University of Chicago Press

Go to www.press.uchicago.edu/directmail and use keycode **PRMOTHERS** to apply the 20% discount.

Member Community Engagement



(L) Women with their babies at an aBRAÇO workshop; (R) A mother proudly shows her twins, both with microcephaly, at an aBRAÇO meeting.

Project aBRAÇO Microcephaly (Projeto aBRAÇO a Microcefalia) in Salvador, Brazil

Started in April of this year by a small group of mothers who had recently given birth to babies with microcephaly, Projeto aBRAÇO a Microcefalia now offers support to over 120 families caring for children with microcephaly and other congenital malformations, most of them related to the Zika virus outbreak in Brazil. aBRAÇO is sustained fully by donations, and operates weekly in a previously unused building in the Casa da Providência schoolhouse in Salvador, Bahia. The group's objective is to support parents of children with malformations of the central nervous system between 0 and 5 years of age, offering workshops on early stimulation, information about rights to benefits and services, free therapy sessions to aid in neurological development, and advocating for social inclusion of children with disabilities. Perhaps most importantly, the aBRAÇO meetings are an invaluable time when mothers can meet each other, share their struggles and joys, and get their questions answered as their babies develop. Most of the women who participate have either no income or very low income. Bahia is the Brazilian state with the second-highest number of babies born with neurological problems due to the Zika epidemic. Mothers who frequent the aBRAÇO meetings report that they value the information they receive as well as the opportunity to *bater papo* (chat) and learn from other women like them.

K. Eliza Williamson, a PhD candidate at Rice University, began volunteering with the group this year.

For more information, or if you're interested in donating, please send an email to abracoprojeto@gmail.com or visit Projeto aBRAÇO on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/abracoamicrocefalia>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/abracoamicrocefalia>

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiMv9N-edgs_-SG4z_uifg



Notes from the Field



Gynecology Talk: Race-Sexuality-Class Privilege and Reproductive Encounters **by Nessette Falu**

Reproduction is the center of gynecological examinations. Many scholars and medical practitioners (like myself) may argue that if there is a center to gynecological examinations (interview to assessment), it consists much more than reproduction. However, my claim suggest that gynecology maintains reproductive strategies at its core practice regardless of how many women and female bodies otherwise perceive what constitutes the core of their reproductive lives and encounters. In my research, this tension between normative gynecology and non-normative patients' desires holds heteronormativity firmly as part of that center. Furthermore, the heteronormative tension at the center of reproduction in gynecology in fact elicits the complicity of this women's medical speciality to favor some patients over others as agents of their non-normative sexualities. Specifically, I refer to the privilege to identify as lesbians compared to black lesbians.

My research based in Salvador-Bahia, Brazil explores these entangled sexual and racial (also gender and class) intersectional tensions to investigate the impact of such entanglements upon the total well-being of (beyond health outcomes and access) black lesbians. Therefore, I pursued nonlinear paths in order to render visible gynecologists' complicities to disfavor some racialized bodies over others albeit shared sexual and gender marginalities and vulnerabilities.

As a Physician Assistant since 2001, I also recognized that patients' identities and yearnings for well-being are not completely, if at all, newly formed at the examination room doorway. My own medical institutional views of medical infrastructures guided me as an anthropologist toward broader signs of privilege that influence the chronic societal perceptions about racial and sexual access to promote human rights. After all, one of the main conclusions during fieldwork was that prejudice (*preconceito*) was the most significant culprit in shaping human inequity across patient-physician interactions for my key interlocutors. Above all, while sexual prejudice was concretely evident across these medical conversations, racialized inequity and prejudice were undeniably operative forces targeting these women. One persistent belief about the roots of biased attitudes and

Notes from the Field (cont.)

behavior, or *preconceitos*, as reported by both doctors and women in my study, is that such biases “belong to society.” If *preconceitos* belong to society (and of course to individuals), then racial and sexual privilege needed to become central to understanding this relegation. Here, I will share one of many my broader pathways that explored deeper answers and questions about racial privilege and sexual inequities.

The *Políticas Nacional De Saúde Integral de Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis, e Transexuais* is a federal reform policy and agenda generated in 2009 and finalized in 2013. The intentions are to address the health inequities among the LGBTT population by denouncing and confronting both the sexual prejudice and discrimination that impact quality of and access to healthcare. It is a comprehensive agenda delineating directives and strategies at the federal, state, and municipal levels in order to eradicate health inequities and promote inclusiveness of this population. This agenda aims to restructure and transform medical care by addressing a range of issues such as sex change surgery rights to eradication of prejudice that alienate and dehumanize its citizens. Although such national healthcare *políticas* are mostly geared toward SUS, Brazil’s public healthcare system, it speaks broadly to all healthcare workers as a mission for social welfare change. As my research demonstrates, many physicians work within both private and public healthcare sectors, and such *políticas* also hold them accountable.

Following the provocations of this national agenda, I visited Porto Alegre in May 2013, a large city in southern Brazil, to interview persons responsible for a related municipal agenda addressing the prejudice and discrimination experienced by lesbians and bisexual women. This focus on lesbian health was groundbreaking. However, I was struck the emergence of this 2011 agenda titled, *Prefeitura Municipal De Porto Alegre Secretaria Municipal De Saúde, Diretrizes Para A Assistência À Saúde De Lésbicas, Mulheres Bissexuais E Que Fazem Sexo Com Outras Mulheres*, only in Porto Alegre and not larger cities such as Salvador. Porto Alegre’s municipal directives explicitly targeted gynecologists to become more attentive and sensitive to sexual orientations other than heterosexuality. This document states that such professionals ought to be held accountable for maintaining a medical environment that is “heteronormative and homophobic” (or *lesbofobia* toward lesbians). Why should this matter to gynecologists? It was reported to me that the psychological and emotional violence experienced by many lesbians and bisexual women prohibits a space during the gynecological examination to feel welcome to freely connect with their sexuality and express health concerns. For these community leaders, the medical consequences, as revealed in a 2009 study they conducted with Anthropologist Daniele Knauth, are that to such women, women who lead through their masculinities in particular, become disgruntled, fearful, and avoid gynecological exams for a very long time, if at all.

Porto Alegre’s lead with these political intentions were also highly suggestive of racial and class privilege. After all, Salvador is the national historic center where LGBTT national movement began in the 1980’s and the heart of social movement for black women in general. I took note that, in contrast to Salvador, Porto Alegre was predominantly of white and light skin Brazilians to the extent that light Brazilians (also categorized as *pardas* across the nation) are often referred to *moreno/as* to connote a darker or hybrid person. Also, Porto Alegre had much higher rates of private healthcare insurance holders, employment, private doctors, and a stronger presence of lesbian activism on health issues during that time.

Indeed, the women activists responsible for mobilizing the Porto Alegre municipal agenda

Notes from the Field (cont.)

were white and light Brazilians. However, they reported to me that this municipal agenda was met with deep resistance and ultimately failed. Many local physicians believed that there was no evidence of health outcome distinctions related to sexual orientation difference. Therefore, these physicians were convinced that physicians' biases, if existed, did not impact healthcare practices and outcomes for all women. Moreover, these activists believed that although the agenda included black lesbians typically more marginalized than white lesbians, it was necessary that "*mulheres lésbicas*" represented all women of varying skin color. When I visited black women leaders of two organizations which focused upon black women's health in Porto Alegre and nationally as well as attended a community health conference with these women, it was evident that racial exclusion, alienation, and discrimination were far more palpable than many white Brazilians seemed willing to accept in Porto Alegre. Although this agenda did not successfully hinge upon racial privilege, it points to societal barriers which impact human interactions in far more complex ways.

I returned to Salvador recognizing that the degrees in which racism and racist biases are disguised in Brazil were not necessarily contingent upon geographic location. In fact, the entrenchment of racism and racist biases are quite effective and operative mechanisms through its extensive invisibility. Porto Alegre was able to initiate its municipal healthcare agenda for lesbians and bisexual women because of white privilege. It is the social scorn that unevenly divides racial identities among other marginal identities in Brazil and across the world. Black women's social and political battles in Salvador are not intentionally intended to exclude black lesbians. What is critical to examine for intersectional research is that when the majority of a population in a large city are at large a target of institutional racism leading to extensive health, economic, food, and housing disparities, social and political change are deeply layered and complicated to parse, particularly when governance and public funds are involved.



Gynecological Encounters and Privilege

How is Porto Alegre's municipal agenda on lesbian gynecological rights connected to the gynecological experiences of black lesbians in Salvador-Bahia? For me, the recognition of how privilege functions to enable certain conditions that speak and allow being heard helps us as anthropologists to engage the power relations at the center of reproduction. In the case of my research, reproduction is not just about advocacy of rights to birthing, pregnancy, abortion, or fertility. For my interlocutors, reproduction in its most normative forms is the center of contestation. Gynecological questioning and discussions that implicitly and explicitly reproduce heteronormative expectations of reproductive bodies and their societal positions escape more than not affirming the

Notes from the Field (cont.)

sexual agency of black lesbians. Such gynecological encounters obscure the precariousness and multi-dimensional agency in the pursuit of quality of life beyond that moment, that is *bem-estar*, or well-being. Human disconnections that assume privilege, normativity, and enact violence via insult and humiliation have no place in gynecology.

My research points to a **gynecology talk** that speaks into agency and interchangeable dialogue in such contexts and is contingent upon perceptions that blackness is synonymous with freedom and self-awareness. The racial vulnerabilities on multiple scales from gynecological encounters to governance are too often a result of racial and class privilege as culprit of inequality and advantage.

If reproduction is the center of gynecological consultations, then it pivots gender and sexual constructions that gynecologists are complicit in reproducing and inscribing upon non-normative identities. Claiming privilege is not sufficient. Deconstructing the center of gynecology, which includes privilege in spite of the most gender oppressive circumstances might get us further.

Resources:

Prefeitura Municipal De Porto Alegre Secretaria Municipal De Saúde, Diretrizes Para A Assistência À Saúde De Lésbicas, Mulheres Bissexuais E Que Fazem Sexo Com Outras Mulheres
http://lproweb.procempa.com.br/pmpa/prefpoa/sms/usu_doc/protocolo_mulheres_lesbicas2.pdf

Política Nacional De Saúde Integral de Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis, e Transexuais
http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/politica_nacional_saude_lesbicas_gays.pdf

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Nutritional Epigenetics and Prenatal Diets: "I've been eating this way for years" **by Natali Valdez**

Between 2012 and 2014 I completed participant observations and interviews at two clinical trials, one in the United States and one in the United Kingdom. These trials tested nutritional interventions on ethnically diverse pregnant women who were deemed obese. The recent trend to test nutritional interventions on pregnant populations is related to the emergence of postgenomic science. Scientists believe that a woman's weight and diet during pregnancy can influence the health risks of her developing fetus, and of future generations. Moreover, theories in nutritional epigenetics claim that food can act as an environmental factor, which can modify genetic regulation and expression. Therefore, the nutritional interventions targeting obese pregnant women are intended to provide a healthy nutritional environment for the developing fetus.

In my ethnographic work at the clinical trials I found that food or nutrition came to mean many different things to the scientists designing the intervention and the participants receiving the intervention. For instance, based on the design manuals I read and interviews I had with the principal investigators and collaborators at the StandUP trial, nutrition was framed through the

Notes from the Field (cont.)

notion of glycemic control. Glycemic control aims at minimizing foods that are high on the glycemic index. The glycemic index is a tool that categorizes foods based on how they will affect blood sugar levels. Therefore, the intervention focused on controlling or limiting foods that are high in sugar, saturated fats, and carbohydrates. At the trial the women in the experimental group would receive the nutritional intervention, which consisted of meeting with a health trainer at least eight times to learn how to change their diet through glycemic control.

The justification of the nutritional intervention based on glycemic control was explained to me in the following way: if a pregnant woman eats a donut, she will experience a spike in her blood sugar levels, which will cause a cascade of reactions related to glucose metabolism. Eating a donut will also expose the fetus to metabolic and hormonal reactions. In this case, the donut is an environmental factor that stimulates metabolic and hormonal reactions that affect the fetus. In the trials that I examined, pregnant women are not explicitly told that their diet is an environmental factor. However, the scientists at the StandUP trial drew from nutritional epigenetics to justify the significance of nutritional interventions during pregnancy precisely because food can act as an environmental factor. From my observations, the explicit framing of food as environment remained in the realm of the scientists and not necessarily in common conversations among pregnant participants in the trial.

From the perspective of pregnant participants enrolled in the experimental group, nutritional epigenetics disappeared from view and what came into focus were the women's cultural and emotional entanglements with food. On a sunny afternoon in April Mary came in for her last intervention visit with Diana, the health trainer for the StandUP trial. Mary was the first generation born in England whose parents and family were all from Senegal. She self identified as African and was studying for her masters in computer engineering in the UK. Diana identified as Afro-Caribbean since her parents migrated to England from Jamaica. Diana was one of the few women of color working on the StandUP trial.

During the session, Diana asked Mary, "what are the main staple foods in Senegal?" Mary replied, rice, okra, and palm oil. Diana then reminded her that some of those foods were high on the glycemic index. She then proposed that when Mary goes back to Senegal to visit her family, she will need to focus on portion control. Mary responds, "portion, portion, portion, I do not want to share a house with you [Diana], too much portion, I just put a plate of food down and as long as you want to eat you just mix, eat, tummy is full." Mary states this with a huge smile and both women started laughing. The session continues and Diana walks Mary through a few different questionnaires. Diana then asked Mary, "what's been your biggest achievement and challenge?" Mary responds by stating that her biggest achievement was how the intervention had "changed the way I eat, the way I think about food – I behave myself more," she says this again with a big cheeky smile. To address the second part of the question, Mary goes on to say that one of her biggest challenges was having to always be "aware of everything, like portions and liquid beverages, I'm not used to it, it will be hard because I've been eating this way for years."

Although Diana and Mary have a warm jovial dynamic during the intervention delivery, Mary was sincere in expressing how the intervention affected her. Take the example of portion control. Controlling one's portion was at first a foreign concept to Mary. The idea that one would measure a "serving" of food calculated by grams of sugar, carbohydrates, and fat is a different epistemological approach to food, eating, and sharing. As Mary mentioned here and in other

Notes from the Field (cont.)

conversations she usually just put a big plate of different kinds of food in the middle of the table and everyone would take what they wanted. In this way encouraging the idea of portion control intervenes not strictly in the nutritional aspect, but it also intervenes in a cultural and social way of relating and sharing foods with others. Mary also recognizes that the intervention has “made her behave more,” which indexes how the nutritional intervention intended to change her existing eating habits. In addition, the idea that the intervention makes her “behave more” reflects the underlying notion that prior to the intervention she was not “behaving” when it came to her food and diet choices.

This snap shot of a nutritional intervention during pregnancy illustrates how different approaches to food and nutrition are conceptualized at different levels and spaces within the same clinical trial. On the one hand the scientific discourse and approach to the intervention focused on nutrition as an environmental factor affecting fetal development, and glycemic control – a method to intervene spikes in blood sugar levels. On the other hand nutrition or diet from the intervention delivery was seen as a fundamental change in Mary’s life. A change in how she eats, shares, and thinks about food. The juxtaposition of both these narratives exposes how a scientific tool like a nutritional intervention is not a neutral object, but one that is rendered meaningful in different ways based on how people engage with it.

Since returning from the field, it is clearer to me why a critical feminist perspective within science studies and reproductive anthropology is fundamental in the examination of epigenetics. Reproduction and pregnancy are at the center of epigenetic knowledge production, and as Rayna Rapp reminds us, reproduction is also at the center of social theory. I appreciated the opportunity to write this short reflection for CAR newsletter because it pushed me to think through material I have not examined since completing the dissertation.

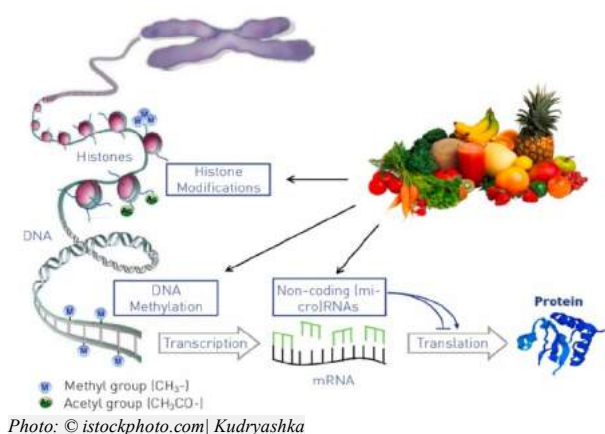


Photo by Natali Valdez

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Notes from the Field (cont.)



"Sexual panic" in Bluefields, Nicaragua by Ishan Gordon

1. May 6 2016 9:00 AM

Sitting on steps near the market. I have a good view of the length of the sidewalk. Creole adolescent women, teenagers walking by are experiencing incessant "*cist, cist*" from Creole and Mestizo men of all ages, sitting on their verandas, standing on the corner, and/or passing by. Older Creole women on the street peer scornfully in the direction of the schoolgirls and under their breath "*reclamar*" (reprimand) them for "*vagosing*" (hanging out in the streets) around town and wearing their skirts too "*naked*."

2. May 22nd 2016. 11:40 AM

Brugen: seventeen, 5'6 lanky, thin, and "dark skinned by community standards," is standing just outside the back wooden door hand washing the family's clothes on the cement *peela*. She's been washing for what seems like an hour before her cell phone rings.

"Wine on mi curry...ahh ahh wine on mi curry" the ringtone jingled. "That's my boyfriend's ringtone, that's how I know it's him calling so I no have fa look." "But you always answer your boyfriend's calls why you no answering em now?" I asked, curious, as she always answered her boyfriend's calls.

Brugen: "Well gyal, I stop taking di pills four months ago '*moi*,' (love) just like di doctor tell me fa do. Plus you know I tired of hiding the pills them from Granny. You no remember I tell you this already? But I pregnant gyal...uhh, I guess, umm...phew!... I'm pregnant. I not giving up my baby, that's a sin. What you mean what I gonna do? I gon have it." We both stood in silence for some time. Dripping sweat from her forehead she hunched over a bit more, forearm muscles flexed with one hand, palm down. She grabbed the far end of the rag with her other hand. Brought it to the near end, and rubbed it against itself, in a *back and forth motion*. Brugen broke the silence, laughing, "I get my anger out this way you know." Laughing, I replied, "I see."

3. June 13 2016 8:00 PM

Pelican restaurant sits over the edge of Bluefields Lagoon. It is a favorite of Shirlita's, whom I was informally interviewing at dinner. I raised my head and saw Jormy James walk through the wooden doors of Pelican with a "brown" Creole girl. She wore, tight jeans, sandals, a pink and blue loose fitted blouse. Her jet black shiny spiral curls sprouted out of her ponytail. "Come sit with we," I

Notes from the Field (cont.)

called out loudly and getting a critiquing glare from the majority Mestizo staff and customers eating dinner between us. “Him no want see us, gyal. Can’t you see him with his girlfriend?” Shirlita said sternly. “No, we no dating. Just friends. We grew up together in di same barrio. No problem,” said Jormy as he pulled up a chair to join our table. Jormy is married to a “clear skin” Creole woman whom he impregnated at 19. He works on a Carnival cruise ship. He is a flirtatious, 6 foot, well toned, adventurous, heavy drinking and smoking, Creole “dark skin” man.

Shirlita and I resumed teasing the two conspicuous lovers. Sipping on his Corona, Jormy continued to deny any romantic affiliation with the young looking girl and she simultaneously shook her head no in agreement. The girl was silent except to share “Mi nombre es Julieta y yo tengo 16 anos” (My name is Julieta and I’m 16 years old) while giggling profusely throughout the conversation. Shirlita proceeded to barrage Jormy with questions.

Talking about his relationship with his baby’s mother Jormy said: “I been on ship. I had a girl here and I don’t know what she doing. I work all 12 hours, and 17 hours sometimes, and she come stressed out to me. I’m gonna do whatever I want to do. I’m gonna fuck with her a little bit; and right there the relationship mashup. When you far and I far, someone give you joke or attention you start do things you no want to do.”

After an hour the Mestiza waitress placed the bill in front of Jormy, who proceeded to pay the bill and insist it was on him. Shirlita and I walked down the steps of the restaurant, in clear view of the lagoon, and we began to walk home.

Me: “you think him really just good friends with the “*likkil*” (*little*) gyal?”

Shirlita: “You simple gyal, him fucking she.”

Me: “Oh. I actually believed him.”

Shirlita: “What else would he be doing there drinking beer with the gyal, Ishan?”

4. August 15 2016 11:00 PM

Jormy: “I use condom every time. The man brings the condom. In the community women no bring condom. See, they feel like a whore. 100% of women in Nicaragua will say I don’t like condoms because it feel funny. They would rather feel pleasure.”

5. September 2 2016 7:05 PM

We sat on the couch in my living room watching the local news. “Was your sexuality ever controlled in any way?”, I asked my 18-year-old cousin Keyda. “Girl what yes! You have no idea! After I got my menstruation I couldn’t wear short shorts anymore because my mom insist that it makes young girls look too sexy and disturbs men eyes. “From 14 or 15 most young people have a boyfriend or girlfriend but it is usually not acceptable at that age. So you suppose to have someone you like but you can’t tell your parents. It’s always a problem. My mom start to say I’m the only woman in this house and just me can bring children in this house so you can’t have a boyfriend. In her mind she relate boyfriend with sex. Basically here in Bluefields no one allowed to have boyfriend until when they [parents?] think them children can have sex.

“Gyal mi mama called me. She was like ‘Jorge is not a little boy. I saw a tab on the YouTube history that he was seeing porn. I was proud of him because that’s what men do. And I heard when he ran away and was staying at him dad house he was carrying girls in the room.’ I was so confused, I was like, ‘Mama, because he’s watching porn he’s a man?’ She said, ‘Yes that means that...’ My mom doesn’t use the word sex. She talks about sex in a diplomatic way. ‘He’s doing stuff that men do.’ He has a girlfriend.

Notes from the Field (cont.)

6. September 7th, 2016 11:30 PM

We're at the local dance hall. A 50-year-old gringo is dancing and thrusting his hips back and forth in Brugen's direction, when he bends over and purrs, "You know the Mulatta? Everyone knew her. Tall and tan and young and lovely."

Bluefields, on the nation's Caribbean coast is rooted in the Nicaraguan national imaginary as the ultimate place of Blackness. Throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, including Nicaragua, Afro-descendants are understood to be hypersexual and promiscuous. Moreover, Black women of mixed descent, like Creoles, have been represented as "La Mulatta," a figure of intense sexuality and desire (Wade 2010). As such they are desired and consumed as sexual objects. This helps us to understand the extreme sexualization of adolescent Creole women evident in all of the vignettes presented and explicit in vignettes one and six. Nicaragua's Caribbean coast was also an object of British colonialism as well as an enclave of U.S. neo-colonial extractive capitalism. An important legacy of this past is the conservative Protestantism associated with missionary and later imported evangelical churches that became central to Creole culture and the Christian respectability characteristic of many Creole families. The stereotypes of hypersexuality and promiscuity that surround creole adolescent women are deeply threatening to these standards of respectability creating social tensions that rise to the level of sexual panic, as demonstrated in vignette five and one. Hence the extreme policing of adolescent women's sexuality by their families evident in vignettes two, four, and five. This policing and shaming is so intense that when adolescent girls act upon their own erotic desires, under pressure from men, they do so without access to the tools of reproductive health as is apparent in vignettes two and four. This is in sharp and contradictory contrast to the ways in which the heterosexuality of adolescent creole men is encouraged and even demanded by parents, as demonstrated in vignette five.

Much of the scholarly literature on black families and sexualities in the Cirum-Caribbean has followed cultural "deficit" or "difference" models. Many scholars assert the absence of prohibitions on premarital sexuality, to explain high rates of sexual activity and out-of-wedlock pregnancy among black adolescents (see Schwartz 2009). Analysis of my field notes begins to paint a different picture. In Bluefields the sexuality of adolescent girls is in fact highly policed. However, such policing, crystallized around reproduction, denies these young women control of their sexuality and reproductive justice in the form of access to reproductive health care. As a paradoxical result, the sexual panic surrounding Creole adolescents' sexuality has resulted in the abhorred outcome; elevated rates of premarital sexuality and pregnancy.

Citations:

Schwartz, Timothy T. 2009 *Fewer Men, More Babies: Sex, Family, and Fertility in Haiti*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books

Wade, Peter. 2010. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. London: Pluto Press

Ishan Gordon is a doctoral student in cultural anthropology at The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Inspired by Black feminist ethnography, Gordon's dissertation research examines the social tensions around the sexuality of adolescent Afro-Latina "Creole" women in Bluefields, Nicaragua.



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