WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND TRANSNATIONALIZATION: DEVELOPING A SCALAR APPROACH

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<u>Introduction</u>

Sharing different ways of constructing knowledge for a better understanding of the transnationalization of women's movements is one of the objectives of this workshop. In this perspective, the purpose of this paper is to provide workshop participants with the opportunity to explore new contributions in human and political geography that focus on *scale* as a central spatial dimension of the processes through which transnationalization of collective action takes place. Although this literature has not so far, to my knowledge, directly addressed women's movement organizing, it does offer ways to think about the transnationalization of movement activity that can, I will argue, benefit feminist research. My paper aims to use this literature to trace the lineaments of a scalar approach to transnationalization and to lay out the research agenda that such work currently suggests for feminist scholars. In particular, this paper will assert that the transnationalization of women's movement activity may be better and more fully understood when thinking through the conceptual vocabulary of scale -- with its spatial and relational implications – rather than as part of a pre-given and un-theorized scaffolding of "levels" of action (its closest contender). Thinking in terms of scale, this paper will suggest, draws some new lines of inquiry regarding women's movements and transnationalization. Furthermore, an emphasis on scale enables us to pull these and other, existing concerns, together into a coherent framework. In my view, this is where the strength of a scalar approach lies, and this is what I hope to show.

Human and political geographers have been critical of the tendency in social movement scholarship to neglect the spatial dimensions of collective action. Such criticism holds true of feminist studies of women's movements as well. Social movement scholarship in its various hues suffers from "methodological nationalism" (Conway, 2005), that is, the tendency to frame its understanding of movements within the spatial boundaries of the nation-state. Although such state-centric assumptions, Conway suggests, are being currently displaced in certain circles, it is by an equally problematic "methodological globalism" in which "the global" becomes the central -- assumed and pre-given -- spatial frame of reference (2005: 2). Despite allusions in social movement literature to the existence of other spaces and scales of collective action -- such as the local and the regional, the parish and the neighborhood, the transnational and the grassroots -- space itself is treated as a simple geographical signifier: that is, as an unproblematized container for processes in which it plays merely a descriptive role as a site, scene, or background (Sewell, 2001). Literature reviews by Miller (2000) and Sewell (2001) clearly show that the field of social movement studies has remained largely blind to issues of space and spatial differentiation. If it is acknowledged that collective action does occur in different spaces, the latter, however, seem not to have much bearing on collective action. "There is no recognition," Miller writes, "that the spatial constitution" (or spatial grounding) of processes of collective action profoundly "affects their operation" (2000: 6). Except perhaps in the study of urban movements, space has been so far un-theorized in social movement studies, and the analytical potential of spatial conceptualizations, it follows, has remained underutilized. Although *scale* has recently surfaced in the theoretical vocabulary of feminist and social movement work as movements themselves have Europeanized, internationalized, or transnationalized in various ways (see in particular Tarrow and McAdam, 2005; Dufour and Giraud, 2004), it is nonetheless with very little engagement with the existing and quite sophisticated geographical arguments on scale and rescaling.

To enable this engagement, this paper will, first, briefly present the main conceptual elements that underlay current scalar approaches to the transnationalization of collective action in the geographical literature. These conceptualizations will then be further specified in the second part of the paper, as they will be fleshed out and interwoven with the theoretical and empirical questions arising from recent geographical work on a variety of transnational networks, organizations, movements, and events. Selected feminist work, published mostly but not exclusively in two recent publications on transnational women's movement organizing -- *Transnational Feminist Networks* by Valentine M. Moghadam (2005) and

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Women's Activism and Globalization. Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics, edited by Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai (2002) will be counterposed -- whenever possible -- to the geographical contributions in order to show how they allude to, or could be fruitfully used in an analysis foregrounding elements of a scalar approach.

Part 1 -- Conceptual elements: space, scale and place

"Scale" is a complex and somewhat contested concept in geography. Setting aside ontological debates about its (multiple) conceptual meanings, this section will present the theorizing that informs the new geographical literature on scale, rescaling, and movement politics, centering on what can be useful to our foray into the transnationalization of women's movements. Thinking about transnational movement organizing with a focus on scale also requires, I will argue, the additional theoretical understanding of "place." Scale and place being spatial concepts, I will start by specifying, briefly, the kind of understanding of "space" from which they arise.

"Space" is a central concept in geographical work and has been historically theorized in various ways (see review in Miller, 2000: 7-14). Since the mid-1980s, however, a consensus has formed in human geography around a Lefebvrian-influenced notion of space as a product of social relations. In this view, social relations are space-forming : social processes occur in space, are deployed through space and, in doing so, shape space itself, for instance, in terms of spatial distribution of people and activities, geographical differentiation, and the symbolic meanings attached to space(s). Explicit in this perspective is the premise that all social relations are necessarily spatialized -- they occur in and are deployed through space -- and this also holds true for social movement activity. Now, if it is one thing to agree that movement activity is necessarily spatialized, the question that remains is certainly : Why should that be of particular analytical interest for social movement scholars? Social relations are not only space-forming; they are also spatialized in a way that is space-contingent (Feldman, 2002:32). "Spatial distributions and geographical differentiation may be the result of social processes, but they also affect how these processes work," Miller writes (2000:10). For this reason, Massey argues, "it is also important for those in other social sciences to take on board the fact that the processes they study are constructed, reproduced and changed in ways which necessarily involve distance, movement and spatial differentiation." (cited in Miller, 2000:10) Succinctly put, if the social relations and processes that constitute movement organizing and activities, are not only deployed in space but are *contingent* on it, then space and other spatial dimensions of collective action do matter for the study of movement politics: they are "part of the explanation" (Miller, 2000:10).

Developing an analytical understanding of the role and importance of "scale" in social movement politics is complicated by the fact that we are already provided, in the social sciences, with a scalar vocabulary from the smallest to the largest scales – that is, from the local to the regional, the national and the so-called global. In this prevalent conception, geographers argue, scales appear as pre-given, fixed, and empty containers for social processes in which they play no real part. Although there are different ways of theorizing and operationalizing scale in the new geographical literature on scale and rescaling (for a brief review and bibliographical indications see Mamadouh et al., 2004: 455-457), a useful way of understanding scale is to see it, first and foremost, as a spatial property of social relations. Social relations are not only deployed "in" space; the different economic and political processes that organize social relations and social life *extend and stretch over different (and variable) expanses of space*. The extent of such stretching is their "scale". The main point here is that scale should not be thought of in a void or in the abstract, but always as a dimension of social processes (Swyngedouw, 1997b:141; Masson, 2005:16). *This suggests to us, minimally, that our attention should turn to what happens to the relations and processes that constitute social movements as such processes are expanded or contracted by collective*

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actors, and especially as they hyperextend transnationally, over ever wider expanses of space.

Scale can further be defined, according to Agnew, as "the focal setting at which spatial boundaries are defined for a specific social claim, activity, or behavior" (1997:100), thus indicating that scalar deployments themselves are actively organized by social agents doing the acting and the defining. Much of the geographical inquiry into scale construction has focused on processes of capitalist production and political regulation. Consequently the role of such major social actors as capital and states in making and remaking scales has been privileged. Capital and states are seen, in this perspective, as responsible for the temporarily "fixation" of preferred scales of economic relations and political regulation (Brenner, 1999), as well as for moments, such as the current one, of *rescaling*; that is, of profound reconfiguring of existing scalar deployments and hierarchies between scales (see for instance Swyngedouw, 1997a; Brenner, 1999; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999). Although social movements have been the object of less attention in this literature, it has been shown that they also engage into scalar deployments, organizing and mobilizing at different geographical scales. Social movements, it has been argued, actively make and remake the scales of collective action (Herod,1997; Miller, 1997; Conway, 2005; Masson, 2005). In doing so, not only do they often engage with the existing "scalar fixes" or rescaling projects of dominant economic and state actors, but they may also develop their own logic(s) regarding scalar deployments, creating anew or aligning with (variously defined) scales of belonging and identification, environmental damage, or social justice, for instance (see Kurtz, 2003; Towers, 2004; Silvern, 1999). *Pursuing the constructionist approach to scale suggested by the new developments in human and political geography draws our attention to such processes of scaling and rescaling of collective action and, in particular, to the scalar construction of "the transnational" in and through movement action.*

"Place", finally, is often of central importance in the existing geographical literature on transnational movements. Such focus on "place" expresses a deep, conceptual reluctance to detach transnational networks, participants and events from their territorial moorings. Despite all the "globe talk" and "flux talk", transnational social movement actors and actions are, in this literature, no more "free-floating cosmopolitans" than the transnational businessmen studied by Ley (2004). As with any other form of production of globalities, the formation of transnational collective action should, to extend an argument made by Flusty, "be seen as embedded both in space and in the lives of emplaced persons" (2004: 7). A "networks" approach to transnationalization yields a somewhat similar line of reasoning: networks extend in various directions over more or less vast expanses of space, yet, each point in the network sits in a particular place (Latour in Miller, 2005). Place, it is imperative to note, is not equivalent to "the local". Places are units of analysis and, thus, may be set by the analyst at various scales. A useful way of understanding place is provided by Doreen Massey (1994). In her view, a place should be theorized as a locus and a moment where "economic, political and cultural relations, each full of power and with internal structures of domination" (154) and constructed at various scales intersect "in a distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations" (156, Massey's italics). "Place", thus, can be seen as geographers' way of reintroducing space, spatialities and their uneven development in what others would grasp under the -- more limited -- notion of context. "Because it calls our attention to the spatial (...) situatedness of all human interaction and institutions" (Miller, 2000: 16), feminists should find "place", especially in Massey's version, an interesting addition to an understanding of positionality and the "politics of location".

Part 2 -- Developing a scalar approach to studying transnational women's movements:

In the current era, different kinds of social relations are being rescaled. Economic processes have been restructuring and in the process have been shaping new spatialities of production and exchange. New, planetary "spaces of flow" -- of people, capital and goods -- are said to contribute to the constitution of a global economy and to the institutionalization of "the global" (scale) as a way of framing our

understandings of this new reality. Economic globalization has been buttressed and actively supported by the rescaling of state spaces, that is, by the scalar displacement of capacities and responsibilities that had been so far the prerogative of the national state. Among these displacements, upward shifts have granted new, or renewed importance to supranational scales of political regulation through the workings of institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, the GATT, the European Union and the United Nations. In addition, the expansion of US-based "imperial globality" is shaping a "global coloniality" that has "heightened [the] marginalization and suppression of the knowledge and culture of subaltern groups" (Escobar, 2004:207 cited in Conway, 2005:1). The recent wave of transnationalization of social movement action (see table 5.5 in Tilly, 2004:118) is taking place in this particular context.

Accounts of the transnationalization of women's movements highlight, in particular, the role of global economic restructuring and of structural adjustment programs in fostering a transnationalization of feminist solidarities. Other factors mentioned include: the rise of various forms of religious fundamentalism and their renewed constraints on gender norms, the expansion of supranational forms of governance and of their role in defining the new economic and political world order; and the diffusion of a "human rights" discourse as a legitimized idiom to mount claims in these arenas, especially at the U.N. (Moghadam, 2005; Naples and Desai, 2002). Major economic and political changes and the availability of elements of an actionable political opportunity structure have, thus, provided the impetus for women's movements to transnationalize. This very skeletal account notwithstanding, a scalar approach to studying transnational women's movements would stress, first, the importance of bringing into view the historical dynamics of the constitution of these new scales of collective action – and I think we need to inquire deeper into the specific triggers and issues identified by particular feminist transnational movement organizations and networks as the (varied) rationales for their creation, and how these may or may not differ from other movements'.

Second, and most importantly, adopting a scalar approach means that the transnational scale cannot be considered by analysts as pre-existing to movement action. The transnational scale is not just there for the taking : like any other scale of collective action (see Masson, 2005) it has to be constructed, materially and discursively, for the women's movement to act. The analysis, Feldman suggests, must emphasize "the very active role" social movements play in carving for themselves a place in "the international legal/political regimes upon which they are capitalizing" (2002: 42): organizing themselves, constructing issues and constituencies, and mobilizing the latter to successfully shape, open up and make use of the new trans- and supra-national political opportunity structures. In my view however, transnationalization further means that it is all the social relations that constitute collective action that have to be stretched beyond national boundaries, and concretely established in more or less institutionalized ways, in order to connect transnational participants (individuals and/or organizations) across wider-than-before expanses of space to enable political action above and across borders. If scale is a dimension of process, then crucial processes of collective action such as movement organizing, mobilizing, and claims-making have to be constructed, in their materiality as well as in discourse, at the transnational scale. *These observations beg the question as to exactly <u>how</u> the transnational scale – in the diversity of its instantiations – is materially and discursively constructed by women's movement actors.*

Attending to the *construction* of the transnational as a scale of movement action raises in its wake many lines of inquiry. An important one is certainly that of the practical problems of transnationalizing. For instance, Moghadam (2005), in her study of transnational feminist networks, points to the issue of (much needed) financial and human resources, and in particular to the politics and limitations attached to funding, as well as to the professionalization of transnational movement networks and its likely consequences. However, within the geographical literature on transnationalization and social movement, the main interrogations are *related more specifically to the difficulties and dilemmas that stem from the*

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increased spatial reach of the material and discursive relations constitutive of collective action. Among the questions fostered by a scalar approach are the following. What are the difficulties and dilemmas "of political organizing across vast geographic expanses"? (Johnston, 2003: 93) What of "the very complex tradeoffs, constraints and contradictions" associated with rescaling movement organizing and strategies to include the supranational scale? (Feldman, 2002: 42) How are the relationships between the different scales of movement activity being reorganized by transnationalization, and what are the related "problems of effecting politics between different geographical scales"? (Routledge, 2003: 333; also Conway, 2005) What about the role of "place" and the difference that place makes in transnational strategies? (Conway, 2005; Routledge, 2003; also Soyez, 2000, Featherstone, 2003) What happens to issues and claims when movements "scale up" to the transnational? (Arts, 2004) And what of the scalar limits or difficulties of constructing solidarity across and above borders? (Johnston, 2003)

Complicating the challenge of integrating scale (and place) in the study of movement transnationalization is the fact that the latter conjures up a very complex reality. Without attempting in any way to be exhaustive, transnationalization in the women's movement includes, among other things, the constitution and operation of transnational women's movement organizations and transnational feminist networks, initiated "from above" (see Hrycak, 2002) as well as "from below" (see Mendez, 2002); the enactment of various kinds of transnational actions, from the organizing of transnational events such as the Women's World March of 2000 or the relay of the Women's Charter for Humanity, to the lobbying of international institutions, to transnational pressures campaigns on national states; as well as collaboration between transnational organizations or networks and women's groups operating at various other scales and the establishment of cross-border linkages among the latter, including the grassroots (see Weber, 2002).

In order to reduce such complexity to more manageable proportions, it can be useful here to echo Mamadouh in her suggestion that movements' scalar practices can be analyzed by looking at different facets, or processes of collective action. She also reminds us of the importance of approaching scale through both its material and discursive dimensions (2004: 482). Although there are a variety of ways to cut across and delimit the different processes of collective action, I propose to order our remaining exploration of the relevance of a scalar approach to transnationalization in women's movements by focusing on scalar practices and discourses around transnational A) organizing, B) action, and C) claims-making or, more precisely, the framing of claims.

A) Spatialities in transnational movement organizing

Tarrow defines transnational social movements as "sustained contentious interactions with opponents – national or non-national – by connected networks of challengers organized across national boundaries" (Tarrow, 1998:184 cited in Dufour and Giraud, 2004: 3). Such formulation suggests that what defines "the transnational" in movement organizing is the cross-border character of the connections established between challengers. Without getting into distinctions between internationalism and transnationalizm, or between transnational movement organizations and networks, transnational organizing can thus be temporarily defined as the institutionalization of organizational structures that bring participants together across national boundaries around a common agenda. Going transnational, movements "upscale", and in doing so encounter new challenges and, it is sometimes argued, undergo qualitative changes. The generic application of the term "transnational" for all forms of cross-border organizing, in this sense, has its theoretical justifications. From a geographical point of view, however, such generic use tends to obfuscate the rich variety of the ways in which transboundary networks and organizations "construct the transnational scale" through their spatial deployments.

The Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region (AWMR), for instance, "unites women of Albania, Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Gibraltar, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco,

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Palestine, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey" and Serbia. around a variety of issues. AWMR's mission is regional (Moghadam, 2005:174) – its spatial deployment is bounded by the discursive construction of "the Mediterranean" as a supra-national scale of political identification. Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) regroups individuals and women's groups from "Muslim countries and communities" and maintains "three coordination offices -- an international coordination office in Europe, one in Pakistan (Shirkat Gah) for Asia, and one in Nigeria (Baobob) for Africa." (Moghadam, 2005:162, 163). WLUML's membership and action span three continents and aim at linking a diversity of non-contiguous "places" defined through the presence of institutionalized Islamic rule. The European Women's Lobby (EWL) (Helfferich and Kolb, 2000) and Women in Development Europe (WIDE) (Moghadam, 2005), for their part, recruit affiliates in the member states of the European Union as they attempt to influence policymaking in the latter's institutions. The scalar deployment of EWL and WIDE is thus intimately entwined with the scalar reach of the supra-national state space that is its main political target, and is fated to expand as the EU itself expands to new member states. These examples, and those of other transnational feminist networks such as the Asia-Pacific Research and Resource Organization for Women, the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network (Moghadam, 2005: 8, 11), or the Central American Network of Women in Solidarity with Maquila Workers (Mendez, 2002) suggest the existence of a great variety of distinct spatialities to women's movement transnational organizing.

These few examples aptly demonstrate that what we call the transnational scale of movement organizing exists in fact through a diversity of spatial and scalar instantiations. Transboundary collective actors vary greatly in the geographic origin of the participants they bring together, in the expanses of space they span, in the spatial reach of their objectives, and in the places they link together. The idea that scale is constructed and that social movements actively construct their scales of organizing according to their own logics -- sometimes inventing radically new scales of political practice (Brenner, 2001: 594; Conway, 2005: 2) -- opens up the possibility that different logics of association result in a variety of organizational spatial deployments : what we call the "transnational" needs to be unpacked. If transnational feminist networks may choose to organize on a scale coterminous with the supranational state spaces they target (the scale of the EU, the scale of the U.N.), they do not always mimic the scale of supra-national political institutions. As we can appreciate from the examples above, transnational women's organizing may also ensue from radically different logics, with differing scalar implications in terms of extent, coverage, and boundedness -- for instance, hemispheric, continental, world regional, or trans-local. A scalar approach thus suggests that we take stock of such "varieties of transnationalizm", and that we inquire into the diverse logics that shape the concrete spatialities of women's movement transnational organizing.

Another central issue raised by a scalar approach to transnational movement organizing is that of the inequality of access and participation of differently-placed people to the (generically understood) transnational scale of activism. One of the salient characteristics of transnational networks, Flusty suggests, may reside in the irregularity of the spatial dispersion of their participants (2004:10). Studying the Indymedia network, Mamadouh remarks "that despite its truly global reach, the network is rooted in some places more than others. All continents are represented, but the distribution is skewed. (...) [with] three-quarters of the sites (96 sites) for the global North." (2004: 493) As transnationalization involves organizing over vast geographic expanses, it requires from movement organizers and network participants to resolve the problems posed by distance : transnationalization necessitates capacities for time-space compression. This refers to the contraction of time (through increased speed) and space (through increased mobility) enabled by recent economic, political and technological developments. Yet, as Massey aptly remarks, "time-space compression has not been happening for everyone in all spheres of activity." There is a "power-geometry of time-space compression" she argues: it needs to be differentiated socially and spatially (1994: 148, 149).

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The means of time-space compression are unequally distributed between people and places. Regarding the capacity to use the Internet for information-age transnational activism, Mamadouh, for instance, points to the existence of the (well-documented) "gendered digital divide," as well as to a "technological divide" between techies and ordinary participants and to a spatial divide "between a wired North and a poorly wired South" (2004:489). The latter evidently plays out in the geographical unevenness of the Indymedia network. It also does in the Zapatismo transnational network studied by Johnston, shaping power differentials between a privileged elite's "easy access to electronic information network and *Chiapaneco* struggles where participants are primarily indigenous and do not have access to computers" (2003: 96). In addition, differences in the means of physical mobility between a cosmopolitan group of "mobile 'global' activists" who enjoy the privileges of financial resources and the ability and freedom to travel internationally, and more place-bound actual or potential participants have also been noted in studies of transnational movement organizations and networks (Routledge, 2003; Johnston, 2003; Conway, 2005) as well as in transnational women's movement organizing (Basu, 2000a cited in Desai, 2002:31).

Thus place – but also positionality in those places as there are elites in the South and underprivileged "others" in the North – plays a role in shaping a variety of power differentials which have consequences for transnational movement organizing in terms of network density and spatial dispersion, in terms of the scalar reach of networks and of the kind of places that are linked together. They also have consequences for who can participate in transnational networks and events. As Manisha Desai notes, "women from the North and educated women from the South are more dominant in the international networks and NGOs than are grassroots women. Of the 30 000 women present at Beijing, more than 8000 were from the United States alone." (2002:31) Place, or more exactly positionality in socially and geographically differentiated places quite clearly raises issues of access and participation, suggesting the existence of, and the necessity to inquire into spatial and scalar limits to transnational women's movement organizing.

B) The multiscalar character of transnational organizing and action

Scales, human and political geographers tell us, are not discrete entities that can be studied apart from one another. As Brenner notes, in a much quoted passage, "the meaning, function, history and dynamic of any geographical scale can only be grasped relationally, in terms of its upwards, downwards, and sidewards links to other geographical scales situated within tangled scalar hierarchies and dispersed interscalar networks" (2001: 605). In short, scales are relational. Processes being deployed at one scale may be influenced by, and may have a direct relationship to similar, or to different processes occurring at other scales. Miller rejects the "one-scale" lens of much social movement research, arguing that "it would be difficult to imagine a compelling analysis of collective action that considered only one geographic scale. Looking at the world through the lens of only one geographic scale," he adds, "might well capture the processes that tend to exhibit variation at that scale, but would miss significant processes manifest at both larger and smaller scale." (Miller, 2000:166) Social movement processes, as we know, are not limited to only one scale. Social movements organize and act at a variety of scales, of which the growth in transnational organizing is only the most recent instantiation. "What is important," Mamadouh et al. argue, "is to understand the coexistence of multiple scales" (2004: 457). Thinking of transnational organizing and action through a multiscalar, rather than a uni-scalar lens directs our attention towards exploring the linkages between "the transnational" and other scales of movement activity. How are transnational organizing and activity involving relationships with other scales? What kind of interscalar arrangements and dynamics are at play in these relations?

I would like, first, to open up the analysis to the possibility that transnational movement organizations and networks themselves involve more than one scale of organizing. The multiscalar character of women's movement transnational organizing, it is important to note, may be difficult to appreciate from current feminist works, such as Moghadam's (2005), that focus almost solely on the supra-, trans- or international

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dimension of organization. Surely, such focus enables us to see how women's movement actors come together to create cross-border organizations and networks, how they mobilize the resources necessary to their functioning, produce diagnostic analyses and plans of action, disseminate information throughout the network and coordinate campaigns at the transnational scale. Yet, Moghadam's rendition of transnational feminist organizing is in a sense very flat: it seems to occur on a two-dimensional plane, its internal processes and relations extending mostly, if not solely, horizontally. Although Moghadam alludes to the fact that some of the transnational feminist networks she studied have regional offices (WLULM, DAWN) or member groups in different countries (AWMR, WIDE), and even link up with what she calls "local partners" (2005:13), we are told very little of this more vertical dimension of organizing. Most importantly, the links and dynamics existing between the "mother organization" and the constituent part of its network remain obscure and un-theorized. Transnational networks, I want to argue, need to be analyzed as three-dimensional phenomena.

I would like here to follow Routledge and to submit that networks are "embedded in different places at a variety of spatial scales" through their member organizations, which become "links of various length in the network.". Further, the "different geographic scales (global, regional, national, local)" of the constituent parts of a network, and the network itself, Routledge suggests, "are mutually constitutive" (2003: 336). Within the geography literature on scale and transnational movements, Mamadouh's case study of Indymedia demonstrates the multiscalar organization and the mutually constitutive character of the scales of this network. Local web sites cover local protests for local audiences while highlighting their global dimension; the global website covers global issues for a global audience while reporting on local protests of global significance; "both scales [being] entwined," Mamadouh adds, "constantly connected through news wires and links." (2004:489)

Although not adopting the theoretical vocabulary of scale, Mendez's empirical study of the Central American Network of Women in Solidarity with Maquila Workers is helpful in providing an empirical example of how transnational women's movement networks can be seen as instances of mutually constitutive, multiscalar organizing. The network is composed of autonomous women's organizations from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador (2002: 121). While the Network itself engages in information politics, disseminating data on "what happens behind the closed doors of the Maquila factories" (130), it can only do such work through the involvement of its constituent member groups who, locally, monitor labor conditions, human rights violations, and work processes within the maquiladoras for the Network. Member groups also run local programs for Maquila workers about their labor, human and civil rights as well as about violence and sexual abuse. The material developed for such action is circulated at Network meetings and, in this way, shared and made available across borders to other member groups. Activities of the Network and of its member groups are, thus, closely imbricated and, furthermore, feed into one another and are dependent unto one another -- which is a large part of what is meant by "mutually constitutive".

Although transnational movement organizing may certainly involve the existence of "professional SMOs" (Social Movement Organizations) that exist and act solely in supranational contexts, transnational movement organizations, especially in their networked form, typically involve more than one scale of organizing. Some of the questions that arise at this point for feminist scholars certainly are : What is the scalar morphology of the forms of cross-border organizing that we study when we study transnational women's movement organizing? It is an organizational structure involving international and continental platforms such as in DAWN? Or European and national organizations such as in WIDE and EWL? How strongly do transnational women's organizations privilege a supra-national (above nations) character in their activities *versus* cross-border forms of collaboration that continue to favor a national scale of operations such as does AWMR? (see Moghadam, 2005) Aren't we, rather, looking at "trans-local" cross-

border linkages, such as in the case of the collaboration between the (Madison) Wisconsin Coordinating Council on Nicaragua and the (Managua-based) Nicaraguan March 8 Intercollective documented by Weber (2002)? How are the components parts of these transnational feminist networks involved in doing transnational work -- from their locally, nationally, or continentally embedded position? What kind of linkages, what division of labor, what kind of interscalar arrangements organize the life and activities of those networks? What internal tensions, if any, and what kinds of movement politics arise from such interscalar dynamics?

As the examples provided above indicate, we cannot assume that the internal operation of transnational organizations and networks is bound to the transnational scale. That they are or not, or how strongly they are is a matter of empirical research. Furthermore, the action of transnational organizations and networks is itself often multiscalar : they engage in lobbying, protest and collaboration at a variety of scales. The Indymedia network, for instance, "target[s] agencies at different scales. Some are local (municipalities privatizing water networks for example); others are global, ranging from worldwide agencies such as the WTO and the World Bank to regional agencies such as the EU, NAFTA and FTAA and sometimes even one state (i.e. the United States)." (Mamadouh, 2004: 493). Arts (2004) argues that transnational NGOs "such as Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature, Pax Christi, Oxfam and Amnesty International have become effective political players at different governance levels: local, regional, national and international." (499) Transnational feminist networks themselves, it is alluded by Moghadam, simultaneously target "local structures, national governments and global institutions" (2005: 20). An interesting avenue for research, these findings suggest, would be to inquire into the extent to which, and the ways in which transnational women's movement organizations are engaged in multiscalar action. What kind of organizational structure (and resources) can support, or hinder multiscalar activity on their part? How are member groups and other women's movement organizations at other scales enrolled and within what kind of arrangements? What kind of difficulties does the enactment of such multiscalar activism encounter? And how effective is it?

The literature on movements, scale and transnationalizm also points to the multiscalar character of a variety of transnational events. Caravans and global campaigns, such as the ones organized by People's Global Action (Routledge, 2003), protests and counter-summits like the one against the2003 WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun (Mamadouh et al., (2004), and conferences such as the World Social Forum (Conway, 2005) create "spaces of convergence" (Routledge, 2003) where the scales of the local and the global, the national and the transnational, the regional and even the body (Mamadouh et al., 2004: 455) become entwined in multiscalar politics. These events, where activists are permitted to participate "regardless of the spatial scale at which they operate" are, Conway underlines, "a noteworthy departure from the practice of U.N.-sponsored gatherings," which privileges representation on a national basis, as well as from "conventional coalition practices" privileging "collaboration among groups at matching scales." (Conway, 2005:8) Transnational "days of action", in which protests or other political initiatives take place simultaneously or sequentially "in different locations across the globe" (Routledge, 2003: 341), also function as convergence spaces that "facilitate an intermingling of scales of political action" (356) in the discourses and practices of differently grounded-- space, scale and place-wise -- participant organizations. Events related to the 2000 Women's World March or the 2005 Relay of Women's Charter for Humanity would offer feminist scholars an excellent opportunity for such a multiscalar analysis. How have such interactions, and such intermingling between scales of feminist action been facilitated through these events? With what kinds of consequences for participants and for organizers? For the course of the event and for its outcomes?

Finally, carrying out and sustaining cross-border, multiscalar politics -- be it in network, coalition, or event format -- is not, however, without intrinsic problems. For a large part, these have to do with bringing together and coordinating social movement actors anchored in different scales of organizing.

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"Geographical dilemmas arise in the attempt to prosecute multiscalar politics," Routledge writes, "because activists tend to be more closely linked to the local, national or regional movements in which their struggles are embedded than to international networks." (2003: 343) As this author shows in the case of People's Global Action, in a context of limited resources (time, energy, finances), the immediate imperatives of everyday, place-based struggles may jostle uneasily with parallel commitments to transnational engagement. Dufour and Giraud make similar comments in their study of the Women's World March of 2000, highlighting some of the practical difficulties and tensions (2004: 31) that arise, for grassroots activists, from such attempts at multiscalar organizing and mobilization.

C) Transnationalizing frames of collective action

Collective action frames are discursive matrixes constructed by movement actors to make sense of social relations and endow them with meaning with the purpose of guiding action. "Collective action frames (...) (a) construct a social grievance by defining an existing condition as unjust (*name*), (b) attribute blame for the grievance, identifying a target of collective response (*blame*), and (c) suggest responses or solutions to the grievance (*claim*)." (Kurtz, 2003: 894, my italics) One of the main arguments of the geography literature on scale and social movements is the embeddedness of such framings in the specificities of place. As social relations of gender, class, ethnicity, etc. are deployed in time and space, they shape places through distinct articulations, layers and "mixtures of wider and more local social relations," as we have seen with Massey (1994:156). In doing so, they produce material realities that are both similar, in the sense that they are related to similar processes, and different in the specificity of their historical and geographical instantiations. Place matters for movement politics because, on the one hand, of the differing realities in which collective actors are embedded in -- speaking from and speaking about -- and, on the other hand, as Soyez contends, because the discourses in which issues are framed are produced within "geographically differentiated assignments of meaning." To capture these variations, he offers the notion of "regional discourse formations" (2000: 12, 13) anchored in the material and cultural specificities of place (as a spatial unit of analysis which is not confined to "the local"). A similar point is made by Miller (2000: 171), who argues that "place-specific circumstances" lead to the construction of collective action frames – of identity construction, problem identification, diagnostic analyses, and claims-making processes – "which vary from place to place" (60). If framings are place-based, it follows that they may not be expected "to be equally efficacious everywhere" (23).

A second major argument in this literature is that frames themselves are scaled. As we have seen in the first section of this paper, one of the ways to understand scale is to see it as "the focal setting at which spatial boundaries are defined for a specific social claim, activity, or behavior." (Agnew, 1997:100) In this sense, there is always a "scalar narrative" (Mamadouh, 2004: 484; Conway, 2005: 4) – that is, a reference to a certain spatial deployment of social relations and to its spatial boundaries – underlying the collective action frames produced by movement actors. Kurtz further suggests distinguishing between scales of problem identification and scales of problem resolution, the first type of scalar narrative involving "the discursive practices that construct (...) the scale at which a social problem is experienced," and the second referring to "the scale(s) at which it could be politically addressed or resolved." (2003: 894). Scales of problem identification and scales of problem resolution may or may not (need not) be necessarily congruent.

For the geography literature on transnational social movements and scale, the analytical questions that arise when collective actors "upscale" and engage in transnational alliance formation are thus "what actually occurs when distant partners, who grew up in regions with totally different discourse formations, come into contact with each other?" (Soyez, 2000: 13) How do transnational organizations and networks negotiate the constitution of increasingly spatially stretched, higher scale discursive frames with the

place-based movement actors that constitute these organizations and networks or participate in transnational events? And with regards to more strategic concerns, how to find a common ground and how to "effectively create alternative imagined communities of solidarity (...) when the scale is broadened to this extent"? (Johnston, 2003: 94)

When collective actors "upscale" and "go transnational", they produce qualitatively different discursive framings that attempt to mutualise resistant place-based identities and claims while setting these at a higher scale -- supranational, international, global, planetary, etc. Arts (2004), for instance, convincingly demonstrates how transnational activism around biodiversity, human rights, and forest stewardship has successfully challenged prior definitions of these issues – previously thought of as local, or national, and responded to at these scales – and reframed them as global ones. Furthermore, in this process scales are linked up : local problems are shown to have a global cause, and needing to be (also) tackled at the supranational or even global scale. Feldman, for her part, shows how the transnationalization of collective action by indigenous groups has been accompanied by a scalar reframing of their constituency as Indigenous Peoples of the World. With the 1975 Port Alberni Statement, she writes, "a new constituency of over 300 million people and a new map of the world" were born, "rendered both distinct and unified within a collective consciousness of nations and peoples who have entered centuries of colonial subjugation. (...) These '(re-)imagined communities' of indigenous nations and peoples opened up a whole new set of possibilities" for collective action (2002: 36). Transnational feminist organizations or events, such as the World March of Women of 2000, also attempt to upscale issues, to mutualise grievances and claims and to represent a broad constituency of women spanning a wide variety of place-based collectivities. Yet, such transnational framing processes are not without tensions.

As Feldman indicates, there are, indeed, intrinsic difficulties associated with 'going transnational' and trying to "represent the needs, interests, and visions of such a diverse array of peoples" (2002:36). Two difficulties are highlighted in the geographical literature: one related to the effect of power differentials on representation, and the other to the dynamics of constructing transnational framings with and among differently emplaced actors. First, the existence of unifying, transnational frames in the social movement sector, from the "We are all Marcos" of the Zapatismo Network (Johnston, 2003) to the "Global Feminism" of the transnational feminist networks studied by Moghadam (2005) tends, Johnston (2003) suggests, to obscure power relations between participants. As previously underlined in this paper, there is unequal access and participation to transnational movement organizing, resulting from power differentials between differently positioned and place-based potential participants regarding the means of time-space compression. Such unequal access and participation have a direct bearing on the framing of claims in TSMOs : they determine whose voices are, practically, in a position to contribute to the processes of transnational frame construction. In addition to affecting participation, power differentials and differences in organizational resource bases may locate actual participants "in distinct (more or less powerful) ways in relation to the flows and interconnections involved in the functioning of [transnational] resistance networks." (Routledge, 2003: 337). These remarks speak directly to questions of discursive dominance and marginalization. Whose voices are heard? Whose are ignored or silenced? Whose claims are included or excluded? What exactly is mutualised and on whose terms? Such questions are quite familiar to feminists, having been attuned in the last few decades to issues of difference and power stemming from positionality and othering practices.

Second, work by Conway (2005) and Featherstone (2003) clearly shows how "place" plays a role in the construction of transnational framings. For Conway, the travels of the World Social Forum from Porto Alegre to Mumbai and the multiplication of social forums at a variety of scales illustrate the "significance of the territoriality of the (...) event in determining who participated in what numbers, the themes, issues and alternatives under discussion, and the horizon of possible futures." (4) The notable presence of Indian movements of poor people, indigenous peoples and untouchables at the Mumbai event considerably

transformed the character of the participation to the WSF – previously a "primarily light-skinned affair of the middle-class and non-poor". (10) Such participation "forced ecological questions at the center" (10) of an agenda that had so far privileged issues of economic justice and fair trade. It also emphasized subsistence rights and religious identity, and challenged the modernization discourses shared by most Western antiglobalisation participants. "The political vocabulary of the WSF Charter of Principles," she writes, was considerably enriched in Mumbai, with "the inclusion of patriarchy, militarism, work, racism, casteism and religious communalism." (10)

There is very little indication in Conway of the political dynamics that accompanied these transformations of the WSF transnational frame in Mumbai. Other works suggest that there exists a definite tension between the rootedness of locally, regionally or nationally emplaced collective actors and the truly transnational span and reach (ideally) desired from transnational framings. Examining the case of the Inter-Continental Caravan in London, Featherstone (2003) explicitly focuses on these tensions and on their effects on the transnationalization of identities and claims among participants.

The Inter-Continental Caravan for Solidarity and Resistance brought, in 1999, "450 representatives of grassroots movements from the South and East" (Brazil, Nepal, India) to Western Europe. The Caravan "emerged from transnational networks" and attempted to create transnational solidarities against neoliberalism and biotechnologies with Northern environmental activists and organizations. In London, Featherstone argues, the Caravan's process of constructing a common frame of action was highly contentious, and "was decisively shaped by the Karnataka State Farmer's Union" of India (2003: 406), albeit in contradictory ways. With a contingent of 400 representatives, the KSFU articulated Indian nationalist identities and understandings of neoliberal globalization that "did not allow positive identifications to be constructed with others struggling against similar power geometries" (in particular with Nepal) (415). Yet the emplacement of Indian activists allowed for more productive framings to be shared, for instance around the issue of genetically modified seeds. Adopting their slogan "No patents on life" enabled the Caravan as a whole to move away from European-based prior concerns with "'the threat of mixing' and other disruptions of the imagined 'purity' of the plants" marred by an undercurrent of eugenics. (2003: 416) Bringing together a constellation of geographically emplaced actors, grievances and visions of the world is "both a condition of possibility for these transnational alliances," Featherstone concludes, and at the same time "exert[...] pressure on the formation of solidarities." (404)

These examples suggest that a stronger focus on the role of place in transnational framings would enhance such feminist analysis as Giraud's (2001), who brilliantly highlights the challenges of constructing a consensual political platform in the organization of the 2000 World March of Women to represent "the juridical, political, economic and social needs of women of the world" (147). These examples also suggest that the positions of privilege of Western-based actors regarding time-space compression and organizational resources do not necessarily or always translate into discursive dominance. In the organization of the 2000 Women's World March, women from the South were not the "weaker" voices in a complex dynamic of alliance and compromise that ended up watering down or even silencing the more radical elements of the Western feminist project -- contraception, abortion, and lesbian rights (Giraud, 2001: 147, 149). Although other cases do speak of Western dominance (see for instance Hrycak, 2002), it must be recognized that structural power differentials have a non deterministic character. Empirical analyses of the production of feminist transnational framings, it follows, cannot assume Western dominance and need to attend to the politics of frame construction. Routledge argues that "Successful international alliances have to negotiate between action that is deeply embedded in place, i.e. local experiences, social relations and power conditions, and action that facilitates broad transnational coalitions." (2003: 336) Such negotiations, it must be kept in mind, may unfold in a variety of ways. Existing transnational frames may be the result of "unhindered diffusion", "blending" or "hybridization", as well as from "voluntary or imposed adoption", "conflict", marginalization or exclusion (Soyez, 2000:

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14). Accordingly, analyses of the construction of feminist transnational framings should interrogate the production of hegemony, compromises and innovations in these encounters between differently positioned and emplaced women, perspectives and interests.

Furthermore, conscious strategies may be developed by movements actors in their effort to reach across space and places to create common ground at the transnational scale. "Such bridge building," Miller writes, "is by no means an easy task" as it requires, "meaningful dialogue among multiple, geographically differentiated lifeworlds that do not necessarily share common views, values, or experiences." (2000: 65, 66) The geography literature suggests here that the difficulties and dilemmas of transnational bridge building across spaces, places and scales of movement organizing are productively tackled through a politics of difference of recognition (Johnston, 2003; Routledge, 2003; Conway, 2005). Enacting such politics means acknowledging the existence of inequalities and privileges among movement participants (Johnston, 2003), as well as recognizing "the specificity of struggles arising from particular places" (Conway, 2005: 1) in movements' internal politics of frame construction. Unifying, transnational frames, it is suggested by Routledge (2003) and Conway (2005), work better in terms of fostering inclusiveness and solidarity if they respect place-based difference. Such inclusiveness seems to be facilitated when unifying frames – such as the platform of the 2000 World March of Women (Giraud, 2001) -- are also explicitly open to interpretation "by participants movements in the context of their differing local realities" (Routledge, 2003: 338). Unity-creating strategies, as well as the historical dynamic of interaction, respect and mutual learning between differently-placed movement actors must, therefore, also be taken into account in our analysis of continuity and change in transnational feminist framings.

Finally, from the remarks made so far about the role of place, and in the light of what seems to be the intractability of place-based framings in the production of transnational frames, we cannot readily assume that existing feminist transnational framings are fully able to "transcend" place-based particularisms (as Moghadam, 2005 would like us to believe). That such transcendence exists is an empirical question that neither constructions of "global feminism"nor of "human rights" framings of women's issues should escape. That such transcendence or that truly "universal" framings are effectively possible at the transnational scale should not be taken for granted. Rather, it should remain an open and debated question.

Conclusion

Scale, it must be clear by now, is not coterminous with "level". Whereas understandings of scale proceed from a very sophisticated field of theorizing, the notion of level is, more often than not, left un-theorized. Usually, it either implicitly refers to some kind of scaffolding of fixed "planes" on which movement politics are played out within broader political engagements or, alternately and more narrowly, "to vertical orderings of interdependent political-administrative units" (Arts, 2004: 501) related to various forms and types of "state spaces". In the former usage of the term, thinking in terms of levels does not offer any way of evoking the idea of expanding and contracting of social relations and processes that is conceptualized through scale. "Level", as it appears, is not a geographical concept and, therefore, cannot capture spatial deployments and their implications. The notion of level may, however, remain useful in its narrower understanding -- that is, as an element in an ordering of units of government or governance -- where it may be coupled to (and not confused with) scale. Transnational social movements and transnational women's movements do address different levels of government (or governance). Like any other processes, political processes of government and governance stretch over (variable and bounded) expanses of spaces. There is, thus, a scalar dimension to those political-administrative units that we sometimes call "levels" : they come with their own scales of regulation. Yet, representing constituencies at different levels of political-administrative regulation (with different implications to be expected, consequently, in terms of the scale of outcomes) is only one part of what transnational women's movement organizations, networks and events do.

In this paper, I have explored and attempted to clarify how thinking in terms of scale, with the help of recent developments in human and political geography, could contribute to building a research agenda for studying transnationalization in women's movements. Specific questions arise when geographers look at social movements and transnationalization using a constructionist perspective on scale. Using such literature and a few selected examples from current feminist work on transnational women's movement activity, I have tried to chalk out the lines of inquiry that this work suggests for scholars interested in approaching the transnationalization of women's movements through the lens of scale (and space, and place), and to demonstrate both their interest and relevance. Let me briefly sum up this research agenda.

Developing a scalar approach to studying transnationalization in women's movements, I have suggested, means turning our attention to the different processes that constitute collective action -- organizing, action, claims-making -- as these processes are extended across borders and over ever wider expanses of space, as well as to the difficulties and dilemmas that arise in such endeavour. Taking on board the constructionist view of scale of human and political geography implies that such research cannot rely on a conception of the transnational scale as fixed or pre-given to movement action. Because scale does not exist in itself but only as a property of process, our analysis must attend to the ways in which women's movement actors construct themselves at the transnational scale and, in doing so, construct "the transnational" as a scale of women's movement organizing, action, and claims-making. To paraphrase Swyngedouw, our "[analytical] priority, therefore, never resides in a particular geographic scale, but rather in the process[es] through which particular scales become [...]constituted" (1997b:14). In this regard, I have suggested in this paper that our analysis should inquire into the historical dynamics and triggers of the transnationalization of women's movements in its specific instantiations, as well as into the material and discursive construction of the transnational scale of women's movement activity in a way that sheds light on the various logics that account for the wide spatial (and scalar) variations noted in women's movement transnationalizm. The role of place and positionality in shaping the density, dispersion, reach and limits of transnational women's movement organizing also needs to be assessed and more fully documented. Transnationalization, furthermore, is not occurring in a void but as part of a multi-scalar world of movement organizing and movement politics. Part of our research agenda is thus, certainly, to explore the interscalar arrangements, interactions, dynamics and difficulties that are involved in the organizational life and activities of transnational feminist organizations and networks. Linkages between the transnational and other scales of women's movement struggle need to be elucidated while illuminating the dynamic and changing character of relations between such scales. Finally, how do feminist collective action frames change as women's movements not only "upscale", but attempt to mutualise an increasingly wide array of place-based constituencies, identities, grievances and claims? How is difference negotiated? What kind of strategies and power relations are at play? And with what kinds of outcomes and/or consequences for the production of unifying frames at the transnational scale? These are the kind of questions that should guide our future inquiries.

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