

## 11.947 Race, Immigration and Planning

Session 6 Lecture Notes:

J. Phillip Thompson

Gender and Immigration

- I. *Servants of Globalization:*
  - a. Economies are denationalizing but politics are nationalizing:
    - i. National boundaries: flows of capital, goods, labor transcending the boundaries
    - ii. Nations are becoming more important symbols of identity for people.
      1. There is a backlash against immigration
      2. Politics is becoming more xenophobic, anti-immigrant, and nationalist.
        - a. Malaysia: round-ups of immigrant workers to be removed from the country because they believe immigrants are taking jobs away from native Malaysians.
        - b. France: Strong anti-Arab protests in France, politicians running on that issue.
        - c. Netherlands, Britain, all over Europe
        - d. United States: Lou Dobbs on CNN talking about illegal aliens.
    - iii. Is this sustainable?
      1. There is a real demand for immigrant labor but real resistance when immigrant labor arrives.
      2. Would it be possible for the sending nations to stop the flow of immigrant workers out of their countries?
        - a. Unemployment would jump 40% in the Philippines if they stopped immigration.
        - b. Remittances are one of the top sources of income for many countries including Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.
          - i. Countries would be in a deep financial and political crisis if they stopped immigration.
      3. The immigration flows are not going to stop. If they did stop, it would provoke a very serious crisis.
        - a. There is a split developing in the country.
      4. Diminishing power of the nation-state
        - a. One role is to assign a specific identity.
        - b. When did nation-states arise and why?
          - i. Markets: arose when capitalism became the dominant economic system. Want to protect

their markets and resources in a given territory.

- ii. Things like common language, common culture, and common history were the avenues through which businesses developed anyway.
- iii. Nation-states in Africa and the Middle East, places where capitalism doesn't have a stronghold, still do not have a strong identity as a nation-state.

- c. Now capitalism is driving for the dissolution of nation-state boundaries.
  - i. It is becoming essential to our post-modern economy.
  - ii. Changes are happening really quickly.

## II. Immigration is gendered

- a. Filipino immigration is broken up by type of work:
  - i. Manufacturing (men) in the Middle East
  - ii. Service work (women) in Europe, US, East Asia
- b. Is immigration gendered in other places?
  - i. Haiti/Jamaica/DR: Both women and men are in NYC working within the service economy.
- c. Immigration can be thought of as a bunch of gendered flows differing by type of work people are seeking, proximity to the border, and class.
  - i. There are many Filipino women in child care, nursing in NYC
  - ii. In the northwest, Filipino men are working in fish industries, etc.
- d. How are immigrant women treated when they arrive?
  - i. Depends on existing contacts or networks
  - ii. Work conditions
    - 1. Domestic work: Long hours, depressing work.
    - 2. Immigrant women who work "double shifts": taking care of their family after getting home after working.
      - a. Patriarchal relationships in the household:
        - i. Woman is responsible for cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, sometimes also the husband's family.
- e. What makes men in this country act better toward women?
  - i. Laws: it is against the law to beat women. Women can get restraining orders against men.
    - 1. In certain immigrant communities, you have large numbers of women who can't go to the police, and they are therefore very vulnerable.
  - ii. Networks: it depends how integrated families are into different networks.
- f. International Division of Labor:

- i. Household Reproduction of Labor: Marxist idea that capitalism exploits the family and specifically women who do unpaid labor of raising children until they are old enough to enter the capitalist economy.
  - ii. Wage-inequality
    - 1. Wage and status of jobs is not determined by skill but by who is doing the job:
      - a. Women are paid less than men for the same position; positions/fields where women dominate are considered less skilled
      - b. Same is true by race
    - 2. Examples:
      - a. Women faculty at MIT earn less than men
        - i. Justification: the professions in which women (e.g. humanities) dominate are less marketable than the professions in which men dominate (e.g. economics).
      - b. Though a native-born woman taking care of her own children is doing the job of “mothering,” a highly skilled task, an immigrant woman providing the same “childcare” is considered a low-skilled worker.
        - i. Child-care providers (mostly women) are paid less than zoo-keepers (i.e. animal-care providers, mostly men).
      - c. In Russia, doctors are predominantly women, and the position is not particularly well-paid or considered highly-skilled.
- g. International Family Division of Labor (family hierarchies):
    - i. Filipino example (from the readings):
      - 1. Filipino women provide childcare for relatively wealthy American women, earning about \$400 a week.
      - 2. Their children are back in the Philippines with (husband or grandparent).
      - 3. Filipino women pay about \$40 a week for childcare back in the Philippines.
    - ii. Paradox: Many of the women are skilled teachers who can provide high-quality childcare for American families while their children in the Philippines receive inferior childcare.
      - 1. Women suffer from the emotional difficulty of being away from their children back home, yet they are the mainstay of financial support for families back home (without their income, their children could not receive education or healthcare)
      - 2. The gendered family structure in Philippines means that children miss out on “mothering”: nurturing, etc.

- a. Husbands do not take on the traditional female role of emotional supporter for their children
    - b. Many of them are with other women.
  - iii. Impact of immigration on family life is really powerful. Many children are being raised with one parent missing.
    - 1. Example (DR): there is a lot of resentment from kids raised in the Dominican Republic toward kids raised in the United States.
    - 2. Many kids in the DR have gone into prostitution and drug dealing because they have no parents around to keep them out of it.
    - 3. Many young women are prostitutes, many young men are tied up in drug trafficking.
- III. Impacts of Immigration on Sender Nations:
  - i. Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, \_\_\_\_
    - 1. Economies more reliant on remittances
    - 2. Globalization has created large gulfs between rich and poor.
    - 3. Losing able-bodied workers.
  - ii. Remittances:
    - 1. Often used primarily for health-care
      - a. Also for education and conspicuous spending.
    - 2. Sender countries not thriving economically
    - 3. Without remittances, countries would probably be in economic and political crisis.
    - 4. Using remittances to impact sender countries and fund projects would require organizations in immigrant communities and sender countries.
- IV. New Development Model:
  - i. China building universities in Thailand and Africa
    - 1. Investing in the potential for economic growth on all levels.
    - 2. Using globalization to take all kinds of jobs
      - a. China/India graduating huge numbers of engineers to shift outsourcing to highly-skilled types of work.
- V. Thai-Chinese Worker article: *Exploitation and Abuse in the Garment Industry*
  - a. Thai-Chinese factory-owners recruited rural Thai workers and had them work in the garment industry essentially as slaves.
  - b. Latino workers in the front factory found out about the back factory and organized an elaborate campaign to expose the operation.
    - i. Won a settlement with the major clothing store; Thai workers organized it so that Latino women benefited from the settlement.
    - ii. The workers' fight is continuing to this day.