IJoC | Communication & Global Power Shifts

Developmental Bodies and the Occupation of Time:
Theorizing Gender Solidarity in Times of Global Power Shift

KATHERINE REILLY[1]
Simon Fraser University

Global power shift (GPS) offers an opportunity to rethink assumptions underlying feminist theories of solidarity with a view toward more historically engaged theorizing. During the globalist moment, feminist critical theory relied on the idea of "transversity" as a foundation for the theorizing solidarity because it created a bridge between dualities (local–global, rationalism–postmodernism). More recently, feminist critical theory has turned to intersectionality as a means to redress the dualities inherent in transversity. I argue that expressions of transversal solidarity tended to reify historical sedimentation of power, while intersectional theories of solidarity emphasize collective identities at the expense of transformative agendas. Drawing on the work of Mendieta, Kompridis, and Trouillot, I propose we understand gender solidarity in terms of developmental bodies that occupy time such that women can engage with GPS in proactive ways. This resituates communication's role in solidarity building as a conversation with history rather than a dialogue between identities.

Introduction

Much of the literature on contemporary global power shift (GPS) has been concerned with whether and how the changing fortunes of nation-states will influence the functioning of international institutions, their regulation of global markets, or the possibility of diplomatic breakdown leading to war (e.g., Altman, 2009; Ferguson, 2009; Hoge, 2004; Ross & Friedberg, 2009). But for critical theories, GPS challenges us to look beyond regime theories when trying to make sense of historical change. If GPS is a reorganization of power, then it also causes hiccups to the narration of history. The debates that surrounded the "Beijing Consensus" do more than drive a nail in the coffin of the "End of History"

Katherine Reilly: kreilly@sfu.ca

argument. They also cause us to stop and ponder our conceptions of how history is produced, and who produces it. Insofar as history is expressed through epistemology—through assumed modes of knowledge production and assumed paths of knowledge dissemination—then what this moment offers us is an opportunity to rethink our engagement with the production of time, and, in particular, the ways in which time is opened up and closed down. What GPS unleashes for critical theory, therefore, are new demands on our understanding of emancipatory work.

In this article, I use GPS as an opportunity to explore and reflect on feminist theories of solidarity as well as the difficult relationship that these theories have had with history and time. I first use the example of development theory to show how feminist theories of solidarity emerged out of processes that exiled emancipatory approaches to history from feminist thought. In particular, during the globalist moment, feminist theories of solidarity were shaped by their engagement with transversity, which was a means to find a "transnational" compromise between universal reason and diverse expressions of gendered experience within global feminist networks. I then unpack the notion of transversity as explored in works of feminist solidarity produced by Dean (1995) and Mohanty (2003), showing how limited conceptions of history sneak back to their thinking. I argue that these different expressions of transversity tend to reify the historical sedimentation of power at the expense of a vision of subjectivity that engages actively with history.

This leaves me questioning how to pursue solidarity in ways that allow critical theory a more productive engagement with history. Recent feminist work on solidarity by Weir (2008) turned to intersectionality as a basis for theorization. But here there is a strong tendency to focus on internal processes of identification to the exclusion of the conditions in which identification takes place. This is problematic because solidarity always forms within a context, which both is shaped by and shapes change processes. With this in mind, I argue that, particularly in the current moment of GPS, it is important to contemplate solidarity against a geopolitical backdrop. This can be done by seeing GPS as a moment during which the reorganization of geopolitical markers (Mendieta, 2007) can be leveraged to create new spaces of historical possibility. Then, drawing on works by Kompridis (2006) and Trouillot (1995), I argue that women's construction of history is unique to our occupations of it, and these occupations are, in turn, a reflection of localized processes of sense making that work to disclose alternative futures. Solidarity must, therefore, be an expression of developmental bodies that occupy time. This changes communication's role in solidarity building from a transversal dialogue between identities (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006) to an intersectional conversation with history. This, I suggest, is a vision of feminist solidarity more appropriate to a moment of shifting global power.

Genealogy of Gender, Development, and History

Development provides an opportune space in which to study gender's relationship to history, especially where this is connected to solidarity and emancipatory agendas. *Development* here means the study of the production of history, not merely the study of international aid policy, except insofar as it plays a role in producing history. In this section I explore shifting ideas about gender and development, showing how growing attention to gender coincided with a downplaying of historical transformation. Also,

different visions of women's experience with history gave rise to tensions within solidarity movements in the 1990s, the resolution of which is explored in the following section.

Feminist research once had an active engagement with history (Bryson, 2007). Early debates between "women in development" (WID) and "women and development" (WAD) were waged over whether and how women should be included in the project of historical transformation that was taking place in the post–World War II "third world" (Rathgeber, 1988). The WID camp argued that women were being excluded from the project of "modernization." Insofar as new social institutions were meant to link the individual to the collective in an improved social order, women's "functions" within the "social body" needed to be better articulated. The WAD approach, in contrast, understood women's exclusion to be an effect of disruptive transitions to dependent capitalist development, which forced communities to reorganize strategies of social reproduction in ways that often negatively impacted families. In this vision, socialism or communism rather than capitalism would enable communities to better accommodate women within projects of community reproduction.

While WID and WAD brought consciousness to women's differential experience with history, both understood the problem to be women's exclusion from the benefits and responsibilities of historical change. As a result, in these frameworks, the study of historical change took precedence over the study of gender. Either progress (in the case of WID) or class solidarity (in the case of WAD) would always be logically prior to reproduction or caring in the order of development priorities. This realization caused theorists of gender to pursue new thinking that drew on identity and women's unique experiences with history, but this came at the expense of larger thinking about historical transformations.

For example, the secondary status of women's issues in theories of historical transformation caused feminists to pursue a "gender and development" (GAD) perspective. GAD extended the idea that patriarchy explained both the lack of recognition of women's unique needs within development planning and the linear historical thinking of WID and WAD. As a result, GAD shifted its attention to gender relations, and, within those relations, Women's need for greater autonomy from Men. GAD concluded that if women had greater financial independence, then the institution of the family would become a choice rather than a necessity, and reproduction would assume its proper place alongside equity within critical studies. It became possible to reframe women not as "lagging behind" men in the historical search for modernity, but rather as having unique experiences that set them apart from men in their needs and rights (Hartsock, 1983). Here we see important shifts toward a "feminist epistemology" (gendered way of knowing), and therefore toward gendered bodies that experience history differently. This "standpoint feminism" offered GAD a way to model the unique perspective and experiences of women in the battle for gender policy (Jaggar, 1983).

But from the perspective of scholars outside the circle of White Western feminist privilege, GAD's state-oriented social-democratic policy battles were a product of modern, capitalist societies and therefore had limited relevance to the concerns of "other" women. In particular, where GAD recognized the state as a powerful resource for social change, it reified the Western liberal-democratic state. In its efforts to mark out the unique experience of women and propose universal policy solutions to combat patriarchy, GAD

came under critique for "essentializing" women (Butler, 1990; Hirschmann, 1997) and "idealizing" the female experience (Mohanty, 1988; Sandoval, 1991).

These critiques of GAD ran alongside a fundamental shift in development thought, which was struggling to find new ways to account for the persistence of underdevelopment after the post–Cold War "end of history." Postdevelopment studies asked why the postcolonial experience was one of continued and repeated subjugation. For postcolonial scholars, the global embrace of neoliberalism by independent nations could only be understood in the context of postcolonial economic, social, and political relations. This meant reading the production and reproduction of colonial identities in terms of global circuits of knowledge-power (Escobar, 1995). The implication was that if knowledge production and circulation were otherwise, then sovereign nations would choose not to follow the neoliberal economic policies that further entrenched their international subordination.

The resulting poststructuralist theories of colonialism exorcized history and universality from development through their deconstruction of essentialism. If development is historical transformation, and history is linear, then history requires that gender difference (or race, ethnicity, nationality) be logically prior to action. I cook *because* I am a woman. You fight *because* you are a man. Similarly, I embrace the West's neoliberal development strategy *because* I am poor, backward, racialized, and so on. But poststructuralist thinkers argued that history was the construction of identity, so questioning a historically produced order, such as empire, meant questioning the construction of identity. Identity was produced rather than given. I serve because I was disciplined into service. I embrace developmental policies because I've been made to see myself as lacking. The material precondition of historical embodiment as man or woman was thrown out and replaced with the *experience* of time and its effects on our identity. For third-wave, postcolonial feminists, bodies and gender identities are the product of time-space, and are an effect of our experiences. Our identity is the result of subjectification, a process that serves to embed "accepted" behaviors or desires into our consciousness. The result of this is a radical embrace of diversity, plus an understanding of time that floats free from history, liberating it to become the currency of global neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s. These maneuvers left development studies with no option but to stand on the sidelines of historical transformation, "elucidating the dynamics of complex change" (Preston, 1996, p. 334), during the period of global neoliberal restructuring that took place after the end of the Cold War.

As we can see from these two examples, GAD and postdevelopment feminism both rejected the linear primacy of history within modernist frameworks, and they both took up women's experience as a starting point from which to develop theories of women's subordination. However they operationalized women's experience in very different ways, taking a universalistic stance toward patriarchy in the case of GAD and an identity-laden approach to experience in the case of postdevelopment work. This set the stage for a particular approach to feminist solidarity during the 1990s, which, as will be described, put history at the service of solidarity rather than solidarity at the service of history.

Solidarity, Transversity, and Globalism

During the 1990s, the tension between GAD and postdevelopment feminism manifested within feminist social movements as battles over the boundaries of solidarity. Should Woman come together

around her universal experience with patriarchy, or should women belong to identity-based groups based on their particular experiences of gender? This tension caused movements to question their organization and goals, often resulting in deep divisions within and between groups. These internal struggles also reflected philosophical debates about postmodernism's challenges to rationalism (Schrag, 1992), which feminist philosophers addressed through engagements with the nature of feminist epistemologies (Harding 1992). These, in turn, ran parallel to debates about globalization and in particular discussions about how to create transnational solidarity.

For social movements, a significant solution to the issue of solidarity formation came in the form of transversity, which:

> effects a unification and integration, a communication across differences, that does not congeal into a seamless solidarity or locus of coincidence. It brings the various viewpoints lying across the landscape of the remembered past into a communicative situation that recognizes the integrity of particularity and the play of diversity. (Schrag, 1992, p. 154)

Applied to social science, transversity has been described as "identity that cuts across difference" or "unity constructed with consciousness of diversity" (Yuval-Davis, 1994, p. 188, drawing on observations by Hall, 1987, and Spivak, 1991). As Yuval-Davis (1993) writes:

> this means that all feminist politics should be viewed as a form of coalition politics in which the differences among women are recognized and given a voice, without fixating the boundaries of this coalition in terms of "who" we are but in terms of what we want to achieve. (p. 189)

In concrete terms, "Dialogue, rather than fixity of location, becomes the basis of empowered knowledge" (Yuval-Davis, 1993, p. 192). This dialogue balances the "rooted" identity of each participant with the "shifting" that is required of interactions with those who have different identities from one's self (Yuval-Davis, 1993, p. 192, drawing on Hill Collins, 1990).

As a project of change, transversity is meant to serve as a site for the examination, critique, and transformation of "worldviews" in ways that uproot privileged epistemologies and encode new ways of being, particularly insofar as this is necessary for the formation of a subject. Indeed, transversity was first taken up by social scientists as a way to reconcile the demands of local ethnic minorities with the exigencies of national political community at the level of the state (Fraser, 1997; Hall, 1987). Then in the post–Cold War period, discussions about the relationship between universal values and cultural specificity were elevated onto the plane of global governance. The supposed decline of state power and the rise of multilateral governance institutions such as the World Trade Organization turned our attention to the question of whether it would be possible to construct universally acceptable norms of justice that would be inclusive of local realities. This, in turn, created the dilemma of forming transnational coalitions that crossed a multitude of borders (Smith & Wiest, 2012). Transversity offered a way to conceptualize

horizontal processes of social movement integration, often getting taken up in studies of coalition formation (e.g., Bandy & Smith, 2005; Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001).

However, the processes at work in striking a compromise between universality and diversity get understood in many different ways, each of which belie a different understanding of criticality and processes of subject formation. It is through these different critical takes on transversity that history sneaks back into coalition formation. Thus, it is possible, drawing on the work of Santos (2011), to distinguish between (1) transversity that emphasizes a Western version of critical theory in which history emerges through the tension between social regulation and social emancipation in the context of a social order (i.e., a state), and (2) transversity that emphasizes modernity's global processes of appropriation and violence, and how these processes work to mark boundaries between legality and illegality in the maintenance of control over history. But, as I will show through a brief exploration of two examples—one example for each of these versions of transversity—the role of history remains circumscribed in these critical approaches to subject formation.

The first example is Jodi Dean's 1995 article, 'Reflective Solidarity,' which relies on Habermasian communicative rationality as a foundation for creating transversity within feminist social movements. Modeling her arguments on the same theoretical maneuver used by Habermas, Dean defines reflective solidarity as "the mutual expectation of a responsible orientation to relationship," and defends this as a universal ideal (Dean, 1995, p. 123). This version of transversity shares a strong resemblance to the ideas of rooting and shifting offered by Hill Collins:

> Rather than an ontological or even teleological conception of "we," the internally designated first-person plural does not deny that "we" often serves as a way of communicating a particular sort of relationship shared by a limited number of members. Rather, it stresses the possibility of an inclusive understanding of "we" whereby the strength of the bond connecting us stems from our mutual recognition of each other instead of from our exclusion of someone else. (Dean, 1995, p. 126)

Given this, for Dean, as for Habermas, solidarity can emerge through the rationality of the communicative norms that bind actors together in conversation:

> The interaction between speaker and hearer establishes a mutual expectation that each will be able to accept or reject the claims of the other *on the basis of good reasons*. So rather than viewing criticism as potentially disruptive, reflective solidarity sees it as furthering the intersubjective recognition characteristic of solidarity bound members. (Dean, 1995, p. 127; emphasis added)

By displacing the grounds for solidarity onto the plane of logic, Dean follows Habermas into the trap of rational universalism, turning solidarity into a prosaic exercise in the construction of norms of justice.

The purpose of this illustration is not to rehearse well-worn critiques of Habermasian communicative rationality through an analysis of Dean's work. Rather, the point is to show that

transversity takes up history through the vision of criticality that it adopts. In this case, transversity is subject to a particular Western conception of criticality. When transversity is understood in terms of communicative rationality, then it becomes part of a project of social integration, which serves to regulate the production of history through the compromises that are formed between processes of regulation and processes of emancipation. Dean (1995) writes about this in terms of the "formation of a we" and describes the process as follows: "Insofar as democracy is rooted in an achieved form of social integration, then, it relies on universal ideals capable of securing the integrity of individual identities" (p. 128). With this bias toward social integration, Dean's conception of transversity relegates history to the process of arriving at a universal set of standards that will structure the establishment of a social compromise.

Here is a first example of what I mean by the limited way in which history is smuggled into transversity. In this case, when history is cleared of ontology and teleology, it is reduced to procedure. This is history with no past and no future—not really history at all. There is another problem with this interpretation of transversity: It presumes the possibility of universal participation in the "formation of a we"; in other words, it assumes universal participation in the formation of history. In doing so, this approach simultaneously ignores those aspects of the international that evade or are excluded from Westphalian models of statehood and also presumes that the international can constitute an aggrandized version of the national. This highlights the problematic tendency of communicative rationality to universalize notions of justice, and therefore visions of history, rather than open up the possibility for productive versions of time based in localized and diverse processes of historical production.

An alternative, postcolonial version of transversity appears in Chandra Mohanty's 2003 book chapter, "Sisterhood, Coalition, and the Politics of Experience." Interestingly, Mohanty attributes her understanding of solidarity to Dean's work on reflective solidarity, "given that solidarity is always an achievement, the result of active struggle to construct the universal on the basis of particulars/differences" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 7). And yet, while it is true that Dean offers us a sophisticated vision of *dialogue*, Mohanty's analysis of solidarity rests on a very different set of assumptions. In this case, solidarity arises out of historically situated *struggles* to resist the ways in which universal, and therefore hegemonic, historical compromises have worked to situate women's unique experiences in a universal expression of time. As she writes:

> One of the tasks of feminist analysis is uncovering alternative, nonidentical histories that challenge and disrupt the spatial and temporal location of a hegemonic history . . . it is the very coimplication of histories with History that helps us situate and understand oppositional agency. (Mohanty, 2003, p. 116)

And further on:

> We take ourselves seriously only when we go "beyond" ourselves, valuing not just the plurality of the differences among us but also the massive presence of the Difference that our recent planetary history has installed. This "Difference" . . . emerges in the presence of global capitalism at this time in history. (Mohanty, 2003, p. 199)

Mohanty offers us a way to comprehend both the gender biases of our globally inherited context and our unique individual experiences of that process. This contrasting approach to transversity opens up for Mohanty "a temporality of struggle, which disrupts and challenges the logic of linearity, development, and progress that are the hallmarks of European modernity" (2003, p. 120), marking out the boundaries of legality and illegality. (So, in fact, Mohanty's assumptions position her in opposition to Dean, as the framework offered by Santos makes clear.) Thus, solidarity must emerge through an intersection of the historically interpreted experiences of individual women, but these experiences happen vis-à-vis a universal context, such as gendered or patriarchal imperialism.

Mohanty's version of transversity allows for a more inclusive notion of solidarity than suggested to us by Habermasian critical theory, given that history affects us all, regardless of whether we are inside or outside of modernity. Yet, for Mohanty, solidarity is a function of singular and identifiable hegemonic expressions of power. As a result, her work has a tendency to be backward looking, reacting to compromises that have already been formed and, in this sense, reifying of power. Consider, for example, Mohanty's agenda for research about globalization. She asks: "What are the concrete effects of global restructuring on the 'real' raced, classed, national, sexual bodies of women in the academy, in workplaces, streets, households, cyberspaces, neighborhoods, prisons, and in social movements?" (2003, p. 245). Note here that we are asked to think about how something that has already taken place, and is therefore fixed, has impacted women's lives, and how women work in solidarity to create coalitions to resist being folded into this new state of affairs. These are, of course, important questions, but consider what we are *not* being asked to analyze. We are not asked to think about how women are working through engagements with solidarity to produce the world. Here is emancipation tipped back on its heels, chasing history rather than taking a role in its production. Here is a call for research that focuses on the historical production of women's experience, the historical production of women's solidarity, rather than women's production of history.

For Santos (2011), the tendency of Western critical theory to offer universal explanations is less and less convincing both because the world is so complicated and because, given their tendency toward universalization, these theories provide little room for the creation of progressive alternatives for historical change. In either of the examples provided, while transversity served the very useful purpose of reconciling women's different experiences/knowledges of history, it was mobilized in ways that did so while holding history still, reifying historical sedimentations of power at the expense of a vision of solidarity that experiences/writes the future in a proactive way. When the formation of solidarity is conceived of as the business of reconciling tensions between poststructuralist feminist experiential epistemologies, on the one hand, and gendered foundations for universal reason, on the other, then solidarity comes at the expense of transformative practices. This is particularly damning in theories of social mobilization, where, one assumes, the objective is to create alternatives that drive history forward. It is perhaps not surprising that universal explanations and transversal solidarity emerged in parallel with globalism; however, as we move into a postglobal moment, these explanations will come under increasing strain.

Solidarity, Geopolitics, and Intersectionality

The contemporary moment of GPS puts globalism into perspective, causing us to turn our attention to the historical processes that *produce* global restructuring. GPS makes it clear that globalization was not the end of history, but rather was both historically produced and producing of history. In the wake of 9/11, and given the rise of China, Latin American regionalism, and a global financial crisis, it has now become clear that globalization—or, more properly, global neoliberal restructuring—was advanced by American unipolar leadership as articulated through key institutions of multilateral governance. Today there is mounting evidence to suggest that the United States no longer holds a position of unipolar influence in international politics, and there is no doubt that multilateralism is under extreme strain (Bello, 2006; Gu, Humphrey, & Messner, 2008). In neo-Gramscian terms, we are witnessing the unraveling of the transnational historic bloc, and a reorganization of the compromises on which it rests. This may include shifts toward stronger regional or national political arrangements, changes in the nature of international governance, or the assertion of new voices in regulatory processes.

This raises the question of what gendered solidarity might be forming in reference to, in the current moment. If transversal solidarity arose in response to globalism, then what kind of solidarity will arise in response to GPS? To address this question, we need to think about how we can address solidarity as something historically productive and transformative rather than procedural or reactive. To do this, we need, first, a framework based in the *production* of geopolitics rather than the fact of it, because this allows us to locate flexibility or potential within social structures; and second, a vision of solidarity that understands subjectification in terms of history and action (i.e., a transformative process) rather than transversity and identity (i.e., a unifying process).

Geopolitical Markers and the Production of Geopolitics

Given that GPS challenges Western control over the production history, a geopolitics of knowledge can provide an entry point to this discussion. Classical discussions of geopolitics take categories such as territory or statehood as given. But in more recent work, "geopolitics is discourse about world politics, with a particular emphasis on state competition and the geographical dimensions of power" (Tuathail, 2006, p. 1). This definition is useful because it draws our attention to the communicative processes that construct patterns of geopolitical relations. However, the emphasis on state power limits the field of potential geopolitical forces and excludes subaltern actors from our consideration, limiting us to the sphere of "visible" politics and to the authoritative texts that produce dominant conceptions of space and time. This is problematic, because, as Patil (2013) recently pointed out:

> We need to approach the production of various patriarchies as intersectionalities
> emergent from multiple histories of local-global processes, or as emergent from layers
> of multiple locals and globals that exist relative to and in relation to each other. Only
> then can we begin to advance analyses that are appropriate for our complex globalized
> world. (p. 863)

We can respond to Patil's call by leveraging the work of Mendieta (2007), who suggests we focus on "geopolitical markers" because "they become the means by which sectors of society are precisely excluded and written out of history, from the web of human interdependence." These markers are formed from "epistemological fragments"—"fragments of society, of human consciousness"—that are "given life within specific geohistorical contexts" (pp. 3–4). That is to say, knowledge is taken up in specific ways that constitute processes of social, political, and economic discrimination, subordination, or exclusion. Mendieta's approach to geopolitics gives us both the possibility of hegemonic knowledge-power and a way to engage with specific incarnations of power within particular histories, cultures, and languages. This concept makes it possible to study the different actors and processes at work in establishing and maintaining social, political, and economic boundaries, and we can imagine different types of geopolitical markers that work in different ways to structure different types of relationships. These markers can take on the cultural practices and local knowledges of the groups that uphold them. In this sense, geopolitical markers are more than just dividing lines; they are also the confluence (intersections) of complex social practices that produce them and result from them. In this way, geopolitical markers are both produced by and producing of power. But they are also within the reach of those who wish to create change given that they are upheld by the everyday practices and assumptions about the parameters of reason in which we all engage.

We need to focus on the trails forged by actors in real time rather than the borders left by historical processes:

> Map-making is different to trail-making, for while map-making closes and limits possible horizons, trail-making opens and widens life's horizons. . . . Maps communicate modernity's intentions to tidy up the unruly edges into the universe of the centre, while trails enable the edges to communicate in the first place—they not only trouble the map-makers but also can cohere into spatio-temporal shifts politically. (Soguk, 2008, p. 174)

With this in mind, instead of reifying geopolitical categories as categories of power against which social movements form and struggle, our attention needs to be on how to transform locally existing geopolitical processes into "spaces of possibility" (Matereke, 2012) and how solidarity can emerge in and through these spaces. And so, rather than seeing GPS as a brief period of transition between moments of hegemonic consolidation, it needs to be understood as a period during which the renegotiation of geopolitical markers can reveal the perimeters of intelligibility on which history is constructed. The forces (institutions, regulations, definitions, traditions) that produce and reproduce markers of inclusion and exclusion and that mark out the terrain of regulation and emancipation will shift. Contradictions will emerge between old logics and new logics, and this will create opportunities to reflect productively on the terms through which we make sense of the world—the epistemological fragments that establish the parameters of human consciousness.

This raises the question of how to "make the world intelligible by opening our experiences to alternative sources of normativity" (Matereke, 2012, p. 165). This question is particularly important given the many calls by postdevelopment scholars for alternative ways of knowing, epistemologies of the south (Santos, 2006), cognitive justice (Visvanathan, 2005), methodologies based in regional modernities

(Shome, 2012), "diversality" (Mignolo, 2002), and the like. These works rest on the assumption that epistemological openness will lead to alternative futures and will therefore release the global periphery from the shackles of hegemonic Western epistemologies. Where these works often fall short, however, is in their vision of how ways of knowing will connect with development to produce social change.

Intersectionality and Reflective Disclosure

Intersectionality offers an alternative foundation for thinking about gendered solidarity building, and it is particularly relevant to this discussion given that it arises as a response to the problems of globalism and transversity described above. Transversity starts from the sorts of dichotomous (and therefore Western) assumptions about solidarity building (you–me, individual–whole, fixed–fluid, local–global) (Bilge, 2010, p. 61) that result in all-or-nothing explanations of social processes. Intersectionality attempts to overcome dichotomous thinking by relying on "multiple, intersecting, and complex social relations" as a foundation for understanding (producing knowledge about) social identities and inequalities (McCall, 2005, p. 1773). For critical theory, intersectionality offers the possibility of multiple points of relationality that give rise to multiple opportunities for diverse forms of change.

In the case of solidarity formation, for example, Weir (2008) points out that "work on collective identities [has] tended to reduce the complexity of identity to questions of *category*" (p. 111), which reduces solidarity formation to the negotiation of positions. She argues that solidarity is still a form of communication across difference (as in the case of transversity), but since "identity is locatable only in webs of interconnection with others, on a global scale" (pp. 125–126), rather than an attempt to bridge categories, solidarity must be seen as a historical process of continuous "transformative identification" for the formation and maintenance of a "we." In other words, collective identity, or the creation of a "we," is a relational historical process of "creating meaning through practice and through narratives over time" (p. 118).

The incorporation of complexity and historical motion into our understanding of solidarity is refreshing. But by focusing entirely on the *processes* of collective identification, Weir (2008) once again puts us at risk of holding history still. She argues that change spreads through ever-expanding processes of transformative identifications that constitute "new, more complex and differentiated 'we's'" (p. 127). But consider Analise Riles' (2000) study of the networking practices of nongovernmental organizations preparing for the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Based on extensive ethnographic study, she defines these civil society networking practices as "a set of institutions, knowledge practices, and artifacts thereof that internally generate the effects of their own reality by reflecting on themselves" (Riles, 2000, p. 3). Not only did shared perspectives became an end in themselves and took precedence over the realization of historical agendas, but the appearance of motion also worked to cover up for a lack of transformative work. Moreover, by locating history entirely within identity, and power entirely within spaces of solidarity, Weir eliminates the possibility of examining how geopolitical markers structure the contexts for transformative work. How, then, can we avoid what Riles calls the "highly reflexive elaboration of a modernist epistemology and radical neoliberal political vision . . . defined by its . . . own universalizing claims" (2000, p. 3)?

If solidarity is to form through an engagement with shifting geopolitical markers, then what feminists are faced with are time's challenges to identity. Creating change does not happen through negotiating "rooted" identities with alternative points of view in the formation of collectivities; nor does it happen through a process of transformative identification. This would suggest that history resides in identity. Rather, creating change requires negotiating our culturally and historically constructed being with alternative future possibilities through a different approach to understanding reason. This offers a different understanding of gendered subjectivity, which I capture through the idea of developmental bodies and their occupation of time. Here I offer a hint at what this might look like on the basis of Nicolas Kompridis' reformulation of critical theory as a possibility-disclosing exercise and the notion of historicity offered to us by Michel-Rolph Trouillot.

We can understand developmental bodies in terms of the concept of "reflective disclosure" offered to us by Kompridis (2006) in his book *Critique and Disclosure*. Kompridis seeks to rescue critical theory from Habermas' overly narrow and proceduralist conception of reason, which ultimately rests on a single universal source of normativity (Kompridis, 2006, p. 223). From a postcolonial perspective, Habermas gives us a form of reason that shuts down "alternative ways of knowing." Kompridis locates alternative sources of normativity (or alternative futures) in a reformulation of Heidegger's concept of "world disclosure." The latter is the idea that "we operate 'always already' with a pre-reflective, holistically structured, and grammatically regulated understanding of the world" (Kompridis, 2006, pp. 32–33). If this is the case, then we are necessarily dependent on one another for our understanding of and reproduction of the world—such as the intersectionally maintained geopolitical markers that shape transnational patterns of patriarchy. In other words, our traditions, our historically formed institutions, form the context for reason. Thus, for change to happen, "It is not enough to expose or unmask the power relations underlying this or that structure of domination; one needs also to initiate alternative ways of being, of going on with our everyday practices differently, compellingly" (Kompridis, 2011, p. 1072).

To generate alternative ways of being, we must understand the past as both a horizon for the future—a prereflective world—and also as the source of possible alternative futures, which can be revealed through reflective disclosure. That is, we can leverage the past by being open and receptive to the experience of the historically determined present in ways that cause us to struggle with our own self-understanding. This includes engaging with the inherited understandings of corporality that inform our vision of the body as both an experience and a metaphor in social and political life. Reflective disclosure, then, is an immanent practice that reworks the terms of our understanding so that we can reframe the conditions of intelligibility and open up room for new thinking and alternative futures. In other words, when we reinterpret our traditions, we create new foundations for reason, and therefore new ways of producing our world. "Ultimately the test of any newly disclosed possibilities is the degree to which they can initiate self-decentering learning that makes a cooperative new beginning possible" (Kompridis, 2006, p. 255). Intersubjective communication becomes a means by which to create new ways of knowing and inject new normative possibilities into our sphere of knowing.

In this way, Habermas' lifeworld is changed from a relatively static arena of communicatively reasoned justice into a flexible terrain of possibility. The communicative sphere, then, is transformed from a "space" of interactions to the disclosure of alternatives, decentering our vision of solidarity and

collectivity. This "self-decentering learning" both challenges historically given identities and also pushes the horizons of historical experience and understanding. The resulting "developmental bodies" are receptive and mindfully open to the possibility of alternatives and change by making intelligible, through their reflections, what was previously suppressed or unintelligible. This means that change does not come from transformative identification within a circle of solidarity, but rather from a reworking of the conditions (the geopolitical markers) against which identity is formed in the first place. In other words, to *rethink* the conditions against which gender solidarity expresses itself and *rework* the terrain on which history unfolds as a means to open up possibilities for alternative futures. Another way of saying this is that solidarity should not be seen as a compromise between global norms and local identities, as in the case of transversity; nor should it be seen as the formation of a "we" through transformative identification as suggested by Weir. Rather, solidarity should be understood as the project of rethinking the foundations of reason. And in a moment of GPS, this means rethinking the geopolitical markers that structure the terrain of reason.

Achieving this requires moving away from attachments to authenticity—from the practices of "rooting"—that can undermine the possibility of disclosure. As Matereke (2012) argues in his reflections on the limitations of postcolonial thought, "there is a need to both resist totalizing practices that foreclose other forms of disclosure and also to nurture sensibilities that render us mindfully attentive and attuned to the disclosure of alternative possibilities" (p. 165). This does not imply a wholesale abandonment of identity; this would be impossible, since we are necessarily a product of history. But it does require "receptivity to new ways of how we can renew and transform our inherited pasts and also how we can correct 'the proportion of continuity and discontinuity in the forms of life we pass on'" (Matereke, 2012, p. 166). We must engage with our being in generative ways that will necessarily destabilize tradition.

In this sense, developmental bodies must necessarily occupy time. Developmental bodies are not working transversally with other bodies to construct coalitions or "we's." They are working to produce history by opening up spaces in the past for the creation of alternative, normatively informed futures. History is not acting on subjects in different ways, but, rather, subjects are making history intelligible in different ways. Thus, I see intersectionality not as an integrated approach to apprehending the complexity of social *identities* (Bilge, 2010, p. 58; McCall, 2005, p. 1771), but rather in terms of the definition of historicity offered by Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot. In this work, history can be thought of as a "space" that is "written" by the confluence of *structurally situated agents* who experience events through the historically and geographically situated set of *capacities afforded them as actors*, and a particular *purpose as subjects* within historical processes (Trouillot, 1995, p. 23). Intersectionality therefore implies entering into conversation about different "disclosures of being" put forward by different history-producing "developmental bodies" with a view to opening up and acting on possible alternative futures. Thinking about change in this way provides a concrete expression of alternative epistemologies, and therefore opens the door to investigations of power in relation to social change by way of knowledge production.

This means moving past transversity as what feminist communication scholars Krolokke and Sorensen (2006) call "a sophisticated theoretical framework within which to understand both the fragility of the ways gender is inscribed on bodies and the ways in which power is expressed, negotiated, and ever present in gendered practices" (p. 23). Following that logic, they recommend researchers use

performative, transversal discourse analysis, because it "helps the researcher understand how communication unfolds without also falling victim to easy identity categories" (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006, p. 59). But instead of reconciling different inscriptions of a uniform field of power, reflective disclosure demands that we focus on how developmental bodies intersect with and "make intelligible" their historical context. Communication becomes the act of occupying time, of conversing with history. When research is oriented toward occupying time, then it must necessarily become more action-oriented, using discourse analysis to study the sense-making processes and disclosive potential of spaces of interaction.

Rather than the articulation of diverse struggles against universal forces, or the realization of universal foundations for justice that allow for dialogue across difference, or dialogic engagements that allow for transformational identification, solidarity can form through articulation across diverse conversations with the geopolitical markers that condition the social processes that produce history. History making happens at these locations, and solidarity will form through efforts to occupy the spaces opened up to alternative articulations of power. For critical theory, this suggests that emancipation happens at the locations where power is demarcated. Geopolitical markers become sedimentations of intelligibility that form the reference points for reflective disclosure. Being attuned to these processes of demarcation presents feminists with opportunities to transform their engagements into articulations of new social orders. To create historical change, developmental bodies need to occupy the spaces that are opened up by shifting geopolitical markers in ways that prevent the past from constructing the future in its own image. In this way, history becomes a dynamic site of opening and closure, and the body works to open up or close down history.

Conclusions: Occupying Power Shift

Expressions of solidarity form within a context, and, in this sense, they are necessarily both a response to something and a reflection of their understanding of that context. During the period of globalist thinking that followed the end of the Cold War, a particular approach to solidarity arose within feminist thought. Given the assumption that national borders no longer mattered and that cross-border integration was well under way, global feminism attempted to construct transversal expressions of solidarity that, it was hoped, would be able to bring gender concerns to the global stage. But this approach to solidarity tended to reify patriarchy as a historically sedimented expression of power and emphasize the project of collective identification at the expense of transformative agendas.

GPS changes the context in which solidarity forms by opening our eyes to new perspectives on globalization and by shifting the geopolitical reality in which we find ourselves. Indeed, if the full arc of thinking about globalization taught us anything, it is that while states are important, many different spaces inhere and shift in the layered production, reproduction, and transformation of the social, cultural, economic, and political. Now that those spaces are reorganizing themselves, the assumptions and agendas of global feminism face strong challenges. Thinking of power shift as the replacement of one hegemon by another is too simplistic a way of approaching historical change. Even assuming that power is held in singular ways, the mantle of power is not handed off like a baton in a historical relay race from one power-holder to another. Instead, old structures and practices of power are slowly transformed as their legitimacy fades, while new ones arise to capture our imaginations.

Further, while our identity may be an artifact of power, power does not *reside* in our identity. Rather, power resides in the logics that guide our thinking—in the epistemological fragments that construct geopolitical markers that shape our reality. It can be tempting, drawing on intersectionality, to focus entirely on the subjective dimensions of solidarity to the exclusion of the contexts in which it forms. When we do this, we risk defending gender at the cost of not changing the conditions that produce gender bias. But when we see GPS as movement in the geopolitical markers that are formed through our own epistemological processes, then it can become possible to occupy these processes through our many different disclosures of the past.

What this ultimately suggests is that women's efforts to change their reality must necessarily be situated in, and must result from, the creation of new logics that offer the foundations for diverse alternative futures. This can be a challenging premise to accept. For one, this thinking rejects the centrality of identity in gender analysis and, speaking crudely, makes identity the fodder of historical change. In no way am I suggesting that culture is responsible for problems of modernity, and it would be wrong to fall into that trap. Instead, the objective here is to locate culture as a rich resource from which we can draw inspiration for the production of alternative foundations of reason. This also suggests that in a moment of GPS the project of global solidarity becomes less tenable, along with the ideas of liberal universalism and global feminism. Rather, in this alternative view, different histories will necessarily emerge from different social, economic, and political spaces as locally situated women work to recast their geopolitical reality.

This leads us to the biggest challenge of all. When we allow reason to be put in motion as a foundation for the creation of intersubjective norms—when we sever norms from the legitimating power of "universal reason"—then those norms become less powerful, less permanent, and, yes, possibly more subject to abuse. But in response I would say that challenges to universality are precisely necessary for there to be the possibility of historical change, and epistemological debate is necessary if we are to see a democratization of communicative action. That is, if we are to occupy time, then we need to constitute developmental bodies that will push forward the parameters of our reality in new and varied directions. For feminists, this implies that we ask new and different questions. We should ask not how to ensure women's inclusion in historical processes, nor how historical processes shape women's experiences. Rather, we need to ask ourselves how we want the world to be, and how we, as women, do the work of reformulating history to make it that way.

References

Altman, R. C. (2009). Globalization in retreat: Further geopolitical consequences of the financial crisis. *Foreign Affairs*, *88*(4), 2–6.

Bandy, J., & Smith, J. (2005). *Coalitions across borders: Transnational protest and the neoliberal other.* New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bello, W. (2006). The crisis of multilateralism. *Foreign policy in focus*. Retrieved from http://www.fpif.org/articles/the_crisis_of_multilateralism

Bilge, S. (2010). Recent feminist outlooks on intersectionality. *Diogenes*, *57*, 58–72. doi:10.1177/0392192110374245

Bryson, V. (2007). *Gender and the politics of time: Feminist theory and contemporary debates*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bystydzienski, J. M., & Schacht, S. P. (2001). *Forging radical alliances across difference: Coalition politics for the new millennium*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Dean, J. (1995). Reflective solidarity. *Constellations*, *2*(1), 114–140.

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ferguson, N. (2009, January/February). What "Chimerica" hath wrought. *The American Interest Online*. Retrieved from http://www.the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=533

Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice interruptus: Critical reflections on the "postsocialist condition."* London, UK: Routledge.

Gu, J., Humphrey, J., & Messner, D. (2008). Global governance and developing countries: The implications of the rise of China. *World Development*, *36*(2), 274–292. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2007.06.009

Hall, S. (1987). Minimal selves: Identity, the real me. ICA Document 6. (Working paper). London, UK: Institute for Contemporary Arts.

Harding, S. (1992). Subjectivity, experience and knowledge: An epistemology from/for rainbow coalition politics. *Development and Change*, *23*(3), 175–193.

Hartsock, N. (1983). The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism. In M. B. Hintikka & S. Harding (Eds.), *Discovering reality* (pp. 283–310). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic.

Hill Collins, P. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.

Hirschmann, N. J. (1997). Feminist standpoint as postmodern strategy. *Women & Politics, 18*(3), 73–92. doi:10.1300/J014v18n03_05

Hoge, J. (2004). A global power shift in the making. *Foreign Affairs*, *83*(4), 2.

Jaggar, A. M. (1983). Feminist politics and epistemology: Justifying feminist theory. *Feminist politics and human nature* (pp. 353–394). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kompridis, N. (2006). *Critique and disclosure: Critical theory between past and future*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kompridis, N. (2011). On *Critique and disclosure*: A reply to four generous critics. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, *37,* 1063–1077. doi:10.1177/0191453711416090

Krolokke, C., & Sorensen, A. S. (2006). Gender *c*ommunication *t*heories and *a*nalyses: From *s*ilence to *p*erformance. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Matereke, K. (2012). Rethinking receptivity in a postcolonial context: Recasting Sembene's *Moolaade*. Ethics & Global Politics, *5*(3), 153–170.

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs, 30*(3), 1771–1800.

Mendieta, E. (2007). Global *f*ragments: Globalizations, *L*atinamericanisms, and *c*ritical *t*heory. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Mignolo, W. (2002). The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *101*(1), 57–96.

Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, *30,* 61–88.

Mohanty, C. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Patil, V. (2013). From patriarchy to intersectionality: A transnational feminist assessment of how far we've really come. *Signs*, *38*(4), 847–867.

Preston, P. W. (1996). *Development theory: An introduction.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Rathgeber, E. (1988, November). *WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in research.* Presented at the Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Women, Quebec City, Canada. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Riles, A. (2000). *The network inside out.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Ross, R., & A. L. Friedberg. (2009, September/October). Here be dragons. *The National Interest*, 19–34.

Sandoval, C. (1991). U.S. third world feminism: The theory and method of oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world. *Genders*, *10*, 1–24.

Santos, B. (2006). *The rise of the global left: The World Social Forum and beyond*. London, UK: Zed Books.

Santos, B. (2011, November 1). *Why and how to take a distance from the Western critical tradition.* Lecture given at the Havens Centre for the Study of Social Structure and Social Change. Retrieved from http://www.havenscenter.org/audio/boaventura-de-sousa-santos-why-and-how-take-distance-western-critical-tradition

Schrag, C. O. (1992). *The resources of rationality: A response to the postmodern challenge.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Shome, R. (2012). Asian modernities: Culture, politics and media. *Global Media and Communication*, *8*(3), 199–214.

Smith, J., & Wiest, D. (2012). Changing patterns of transnational social movement organizing. *Social movements in the world system: The politics of crisis and transformation.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Soguk, N. (2008). Transversal communication, diaspora, and the Euro-Kurds. In C. M. Constantinou, O. P. Richmond, & A. M. S. Watson (Eds.), *Cultures and politics of global communication* (pp. 173–192). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Spivak, G. (1991). Reflections on cultural studies in the post-colonial conjuncture. *Critical Studies, 3*(1), 63–78.

Trouillot, M.-R. (1995). *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history*. Boston, MA: Beacon.

Tuathail, G. O. (2006). General introduction: Thinking critically about geopolitics. In G. O. Tuathail, S. Dalby, & P. Routledge (Eds.), *The geopolitics reader* (2nd ed., pp. 1–14). London, UK: Routledge.

Visvanathan, S. (2005). Knowledge, justice and democracy. In M. Leach, I. Scoones, & B. Wynne (Eds.), *Science and citizens: Globalization and the challenge of engagement* (pp. 83–94). New York, NY: Zed Books.

Yuval-Davis, N. (1994). Women, ethnicity and empowerment. *Feminism & Psychology*, *4*, 179–197. doi:10.1177/0959353594041010

Weir, A. (2008). Global feminism and transformative identity politics. *Hypatia*, *23*(4), 110–133. doi:10.1353/hyp.0.0063