



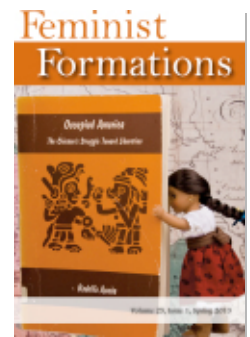
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Because Words Are Not Enough: Latina Re-Visionings of Transnational Collaborations Using Health Promotion for Gender Justice and Social Change

ESTER R. SHAPIRO

This essay suggests that U.S. Latina immigrants working in feminist health promotion can make a distinctive contribution to transnational and transversal approaches to feminist activism while remaining associated with global third-world feminisms through nation of origin connections. The author, a Cuban American who served as coordinating editor of Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas (NCNV), the Spanish cultural adaptation of Our Bodies, Ourselves (OBOS), uses concepts from border-crossing and U.S. third-world feminisms to demonstrate how including U.S. Latina perspectives helped re-vision the text's relationship to transnational feminist movements. She describes the ways U.S. Latina and Latin American/Caribbean feminisms share approaches to grassroots organizing, but have different "cultures of politics," linking individual women, activist organizations, and global movements for gender justice and social change. She highlights the meaningful role of Puerto Rican and Caribbean feminisms as transnational travelers and pivotal guides for expanding our understanding of effective strategies linking local and global, as well as North and South. She concludes with strategies for expanding collaborations between U.S. Latinas and Latin American/Caribbean feminists, highlighting opportunities for scholar/activists working for reproductive justice as part of broader movements for social change.

Keywords: transnational / U.S. Latina / health promotion / feminist activism / popular education / reproductive justice

This essay honors the memory of Helen Rodriguez Trias, Puerto Rican pediatrician and activist, whose leadership built bridges and inspired North/South collaborations toward a shared vision of women's health and rights throughout the Americas.

Latinas Bridging Local and Global Gender Politics: Transnational Health Promotion as Activist Strategy

International movements working toward women's equality and empowerment have focused on gender and health, especially reproductive health and rights and freedom from violence, as fundamental to women's sovereignty and full participation as citizens (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Palomino

2002; Petchesky 2003; Petchesky and Judd 1998; Shepard 2002). These international movements have used recent World Health Organization paradigms of health promotion that define health as the presence of well-being and the resources for its actualization (Kickbusch 2003). These international movements contribute to emerging interdisciplinary, multi-systemic, contextual definitions of women's empowerment emphasizing quantitative and qualitative measures of access to resources, agency in self-determination of strategic life choices, and well-being outcomes, while working to achieve equitable access to conditions promoting good health as a human right (Kabeer 1999; Kar, Pascual, and Chickering 1999; Kar et al. 2002; Malhotra 2002; Shapiro 2000a). Recent decades have seen enormous growth in scholarship on transnational feminist activism, including recognition of transnational feminism's contribution of global strategies, and debate of its value to local organizations (Alvarez 1998, 2000; Basu 1995, 2000; Mendoza 2002; Naples and Desai 2002). In the following essay, I use concepts bridging U.S. Latina and transnational feminisms to analyze the contributions of a U.S. Latina perspective in creating *Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas (NCNV)*, the Spanish cultural adaptation of *Our Bodies, Ourselves (OBOS)*. I analyze how a U.S. Latina perspective contributed to the transformation of the text into a meaningful forum for conversations on feminist activism encompassing women's unique localized cultural experience and connecting that experience to transnational networks and strategies for achieving gender justice and social change.

A great deal of the literature on women's and feminists' transnational organizing emphasizes work centered in international settings rather than in U.S. communities of color (Alvarez 2000; Kaplan and Grewal 2002; Kaplan, Alarcon, and Moallem 1999; Mohanty 2003; Naples and Desai 2002; Yuval-Davis 1999). However, a growing literature on Latino communities emphasizes the impact of border-crossing and transnational migration experiences on U.S. Latinas (Zavella 2002; Conway, Bailey, and Ellis 2001). Frameworks exploring the transnational terrain from the standpoint of U.S. third-world communities argue for relational, process-oriented perspectives examining the historical unfolding of power relations as expressed in the practice of everyday life in local contexts (Bonilla et al. 1998; Naples and Desai 2002; Shohat 2002; Velez-Ibanez and Sampaio 2002). Engendering these perspectives through the study of *everyday transnationalism* and *transnationalism from below*, we can better map pathways by which women's everyday survival strategies become a vehicle for personal and collective empowerment.¹ Transnational activism in women's health promotion offers important lessons learned for supporting linked processes of personal, organizational, and social change creating "virtuous circles" which expand women's empowerment.² While bridging global and local perspectives on women's activism in debates on

methods of transnational organizing, Latinas working in U.S. settings offer meaningful contributions to understanding the *lived experience* of transnationalism as it affects everyday survival. U.S. Latinas also offer meaningful contributions to the study of strategies supporting the formation of oppositional organizations and communities of solidarity (Acosta-Belen and Bose 2000; Mohanty 2003; Sanchez 2001; Zavella 2002).

U.S. Latinas come from all over Latin America and the Caribbean, representing diverse nationalities, political and economic circumstances of migration, and generations. In addition, U.S. Latinas settle in different parts of the United States. Immigrating Latinas each encounter existing or receiving communities and, in turn, create distinctive dynamics of language, race, culture, educational, and economic opportunity as ecologies of acculturation and potential transculturation.³ Feminist scholarship on Latina political participation has documented women's frequent participation in highly localized community-based activism specific to sending and receiving communities (Hardy-Fanta 2002). A powerful foundation of Chicana feminist writing is increasingly being expanded by a diverse group of Latinas from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America, and Latin America (see Torres 1998; Latina Feminist Group 2002). Puerto Rican feminists on both the island and the U.S. mainland offer especially meaningful work bridging Latin American and Caribbean-based feminist activism and U.S. Latina perspectives (Warren and Colon 2003). Interdisciplinary, comparative perspectives highlighting the complexity of Latina experience in transnational settings can help us address intersections of gender, class, race, language, and ethnicity as sites of oppression and as powerful resources for resistance and transcendence. These approaches need to be multi-dimensional and place-based, capable of moving between the intimate politics of personal experience and the structural politics of social change while also recognizing their interdependence.

The Political Is Personal: Transnationalism as Lived Experience and Activist Practice

While transnational feminist and cultural studies have become the focus of disciplinary debate, it is important to remember that the violent displacements of family lives as they collide with the forces of politics and history are deeply personal. I was born in Havana, Cuba, and grew up in Miami, Florida, as part of a tightly knit Eastern European Jewish extended family whose five generations of living memory included two world wars and two revolutions across three continents and five languages. In the United States, both Cuban and Jewish diaspora narratives begin with forced exile from a Promised Land and close with insistence on eventual return; both stories erase the complex interweaving of many cultures,

languages, and generations as they evolve both at home and in diaspora. My family, too, created an official story of triumph over adversity, literally whitewashing the ethnic and racial solidarities and identities that characterized our multi-racial, culturally complex diaspora sojourns as Jews in Europe, in Palestine, in Cuba, and in the United States. I was taught to fear politics and dedicate myself to family loyalty by means of a gender-stereotyped, materialistic strategy for preserving family security and unity. My apparent wholesale rebellion against these imposed values was revealed over the years as profound loyalty to a radically different set of values: the deeply ethical valuing of our human interdependence, and dedication to uncovering the abuses of power that erode our abilities to sustain loving environments of healthy mutuality (Shapiro 1994b, 2002, 1994/2005 [in press]).

With my own family as a starting point, I study the complex ecologies of time and space, and of material and symbolic resources that make it possible for us to recognize difference while practicing solidarity in interdependent processes of everyday survival and change. Beginning with my own boundary-crossing life and work, I have struggled to confront the ethnocentrism, individualism, racism, and unacknowledged investments of my academic discipline, my work as a clinical psychologist, and my U.S. feminism (Shapiro 1996a, 2001). Seeking new words with which to honor our immigrant family struggles to survive and creatively adapt to new homes, I study how women explore this new territory and bear many of its burdens, finding ways to build bridges of continuity in a landscape of change (Shapiro 1996b). I also discovered how as immigrants we are encouraged to drink the U.S. *Milk of Amnesia* (Tropicana 2000) and forsake our collective responsibilities as engaged citizens fighting for justice; as immigrants this was the price of admission to a fragmenting, isolating consumer culture in which everything is for sale including our intimate relationships. We know from the research literature on racial disparities in health, from feminist debates on gender and culture, and from many testimonials by U.S. women of color, that border-crossing offers both burden and opportunity in the struggle to make the best of both worlds rather than simply experience the worst.

My own encounter with Latin American and Caribbean feminisms through the prism of a particular activist project provided the catalyst for new personal, intellectual, and political knowledge and practice. As coordinating editor of *Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas* (NCNV), I became inspired by the work of Latin American and Caribbean feminists to revisit my assumptions about gender, culture, and health promotion that were formed within my coming of age as a North American feminist and by my life and work in the United States. The process of adaptation, initially biased toward an overemphasis on the U.S. text, became transformed as the U.S. Latina editors discovered and negotiated differences

by critically examining the connection of both *OBOS* and *NCNV* to the political movements each edition represented, and exploring the place of U.S. Latinas in bridging the texts. Initially, the Latina editorial groups framed our explorations of Latin American and Caribbean feminist organizations and their work as part of gathering culturally meaningful materials and incorporating the work of these organizations to expand the predominantly U.S.-based resources included in every edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Yet, beginning with these textual explorations, we found that following their implications catalyzed a deeper consideration of the complex, highly specific encounters between individual lives in everyday practices, cultural meanings, and community connections inspiring personal change in solidarity with others toward creating a more just society. These encounters themselves illuminated new facets of border-crossing methods, infusing familiar words with new meanings, as “citizenship,” “self-help” or “choice” became clarified, redefined, and transformed in their new locations, politics, poetics, and practice of gender and social justice.

**From *Our Bodies, Ourselves* to
Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas (*Our Bodies, Our Lives*):
Creating a Transnational Trialogue**

Our Bodies, Ourselves (*OBOS*), the groundbreaking women’s health information resource book, highly influential in the 1970s, sold millions of copies in the United States, and was translated or adapted into nineteen languages. Women all over the world see the book as a catalyst mobilizing the women’s health movement in reproductive health and rights, social and domestic violence, and gender justice. However, the book remains embedded in models and methods of white North American feminism (Davis 2003; Thayer 2000). *Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas* (2000) was written collaboratively with more than 30 Latin American women’s health groups and coordinated by a group of Boston-based Latinas, creating a transformational “trialogo” between the North American text, the concepts, materials, and methods of Latin American and Caribbean women’s health activists, and U.S. Latinas working at the intersection of language, gender, culture, and health promotion for social change. The cultural adaptation project was initiated at a time of enormous transition for the partners involved in the “trialogo”: for the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective (BWHBC) as an organization shifting from a founder’s collective to a nonprofit organization with a racially and culturally diverse staff and board, for the Latin American and Caribbean feminist groups during the intensified organizing that preceded and followed the Cairo and Beijing meetings, and for Latinas working within the BWHBC.⁴

Constructing these collaborations as U.S. Latinas working within a legendary organization of second-wave feminism and adapting a movement's canonical text forced us to confront some of the text's North American assumptions in light of Zavella's (2002) *peripheral vision* and Sandoval's (2000) *differential consciousness*, strategies our Latina editorial committee used in solving problems presented by the original cultural adaptation plan.⁵ We also learned from our Latin American and Caribbean collaborators as they grappled with their own struggles as a growing movement confronting the ways the region's feminist activism had tilted toward institutionalization and professionalization. These transnational collaborations viewed through a Latina lens helped us create a text based on culturally meaningful images of healthy interdependence, mutuality, spirituality, and active citizenship for gender justice, clarifying pathways and processes linking our personal struggles and strengths, social inequities, and the transformative power of gender equality.

The original planning for the cultural adaptation, *Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas* (NCNV), was designed as a Latin American adaptation of the updated *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (OBOS). U.S. Latinas were not part of this updated planned adaptation. Rather, NCNV was initially conceptualized as a Latin American international edition that could document and include the nearly two decades of feminist activism in the region which the 1973 edition of OBOS and an early direct translation had helped catalyze and inspire (Gomez 1993). Members of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (BWHBC) attended the Fifth Feminist Encuentro in Puerto Plata, Argentina, in 1990 to arrange a cultural adaptation to be conducted in the region. However, no single group had the resources to coordinate the complex cultural adaptation process without overburdening their local and regional work. Feminists in the region were confronting enormous challenges and opportunities in the aftermath of brutal dictatorships and transitions to democracy. Instead, participants from the region requested that the translation and cultural adaptation be coordinated from Boston, with individual groups adapting specific chapters most closely connected to their own areas of activism. At that stage a group of U.S. Latinas from different backgrounds but predominantly from the Caribbean, with our own complex migration histories, race and class backgrounds, and Spanish language competence, became the intermediaries between the U.S. text and the models, methods, and materials being generated by the Latin American and Caribbean organizations involved in adapting the text.

Initially, the editorial group of Latinas began our work following the agreed-upon framework that regional feminist groups would receive translated chapters that they would adapt, and that Latinas would serve as coordinators for what was fundamentally a conversation between the

English-speaking U.S. text and the Latin American and Caribbean groups working on adaptations. Very quickly, we confronted flaws in the project, including an extremely poor initial translation, an inadequate time-line for the Latin American groups to make their contribution, and no funding for the dialogues and face-to-face meetings required to transform the text to transcend the basic structure of the U.S.-based chapters. These errors required an extended phase for re-editing the text to restore the companionable, accessible voice so critical to *OBOS*'s success. This extended editing phase supported a longer process of reflection and re-organization of the project, generating a transformative transnational dialogue that more centrally incorporated U.S.-based Latina contributions to a transformed text.

Early in this process, our *NCNV* editorial group was told that publishers were interested in an *NCNV* edition for U.S. Latinas. Although reluctant to circulate two editions in Spanish, we considered the possibilities of creating a U.S. Latina edition as an independent project. Struggling with the complexity of a text that was already seeking ways to incorporate the enormous national and regional differences characterizing the Latin American and Caribbean edition, we despaired that neither our timeframe nor our resources would permit us the ambitious undertaking of incorporating a U.S. Latina perspective. Rosie Muñoz Lopez proposed the solution that was elegantly simple by deploying a differential consciousness to reframe a concept in order to use it in a new setting. Muñoz Lopez noted that *OBOS* itself incorporated the voices of a shifting "we" which was textually interpreted in context as sometimes referring to all U.S. women, and other times to specific women. Through the participation of Latinas in the organization the U.S. Latina perspective had been expanded beginning with the 1984 edition.⁶ Why not use a similar strategy in the Spanish cultural adaptation, letting the "we" who speaks be defined in context while further expanding the sections referring to U.S. Latinas? After all, U.S. Latinas had our own ties to national origin, and the book could address us as women of Latin America and the Caribbean wherever in the world we were living. With this reframe of the text as a transnational edition for the Americas, our work group of Latinas became more active in reflecting on our relationship to the U.S. text and to Latin American and Caribbean feminist movements as Latinas with our own standpoint and migration circumstances. Looking back on this moment with the perspective of the book's completion, this decision reflected the recognition that our roles as Latinas translating two movements to unknown readers required the creation of a textual voice inviting readers to complete the text as they applied it to their own very specific circumstances and contexts. From this moment onward, the Latina editorial committee began to travel beyond the original work plan for *NCNV*. We restructured

a methodology for adaptation as we discovered the fundamental ways the original adaptation plan contradicted the methods that had made *OBOS* a compelling voice for women's health as a vehicle for social change.

Transnationalism and Textual Transformations: *OBOS* and *NCNV* as Evolving Tools for Social Change

Considering *OBOS*'s importance in U.S. and global feminist and women's health movements, it has been remarkably little studied in scholarly literature (Davis 2003). Yet, as Latinas working between the U.S. text and the Latin American and Caribbean adaptations, we were forced to study the fundamental structure of *OBOS* as a way of exploring its culturally based, textual and political strategies and assumptions. I was the only member of the editorial team to also be on the first nonprofit board of the organization, and throughout my work with the organization these dual roles were a source of rich learning and tremendous conflict.⁷ In untangling my subjectivity and responsibilities within both roles, I found it essential to begin to study the history of *OBOS* as text and its relationship to the founding members within a changing organization and a changing U.S. feminist movement. This comparative, border-crossing approach mirrored the strategic methodologies of U.S. feminists of color, whose surviving and thriving at intersecting spaces of oppression and opportunity requires interpreting very specific situations. These strategic methodologies are undertaken to discern the play of power and privilege, achieving a critical perspective on power and difference that helps generate a flexible, strategic third path.⁸ Over the course of the project, this implicit border-crossing methodology became more explicitly a perspective deliberately embodied in the text. In the spirit of Aida Hurtado's method in *The Color of Privilege: Three Blasphemies on Race and Feminism* (1996), we questioned sources of race and class-based subjectivities rarely spoken of in interracial feminist conversations. The following sections articulate the three necessary and forbidden questions posed within our editorial working group of Latinas that helped us identify points of difference and connection and transform their embodiment in the text.

***Is It a Book, or Is It a Movement?* Questioning *OBOS* as Text and Its Relationship to Changing U.S. Feminisms**

The first irreverent question in confronting a canonical text within an idealized organization was to ask how *OBOS* as text had changed during its 25-year history. We explored how *OBOS* had expanded in size along with the U.S. women's health movement it helped create while declining

in readership and political influence. *OBOS* emerged in 1969 as a mutual education course entitled “Women and Their Bodies,” as a group of young Boston feminists prepared materials that would permit them to challenge a patriarchal health care system. The fundamental “bone structure” of *OBOS* emerged from the founders’ methods of engagement with each other and with the thriving feminist movement of the early 1970s. These powerful participatory methods for social change embodied in the text began with women’s testimonials describing their struggles with reproductive and other women’s health issues, as well as their coming to consciousness of their own strengths. The text then offered accessible health information, especially in the important and tightly regulated areas of reproductive health, contraception, and abortion rights during a period when the right to a legal abortion was still being won. The text also offered a socialist feminist analysis of patriarchy and capitalism as forces in the health care system. Finally, the text included descriptions of emerging women-centered health centers and political organizations, with their names, addresses, and contact information. Initially distributed in mimeograph form, then published by the local, nonprofit New England Press, *OBOS* reached its widest distribution when it was commercially published by Simon & Schuster in 1973 and remained on the bestseller list for most of the 1970s. Because *OBOS*’s publication coincided with the first international women’s health meetings, the book also circulated throughout the world and was deeply influential to emerging global feminist networks.

In subsequent editions, *OBOS* expanded in size along with its own growing feminist and women’s health organizations (Norsigian et al. 1999; Ruzeck and Becker 1999). The fundamental textual elements remained the same, but they shifted significantly in their proportion and in their political framework and connections. Textually, the book grew enormously in the content of information and in the links to bibliographic and organizational resources, becoming much more like an encyclopedia than like a friend and guide. Politically, the book became allied more with consumer education movements and with the growing number of professionalized women’s health care and advocacy organizations with their investments in the systems’ status quo. As one of the founders tellingly described the evolution of the text, “The first edition blamed ‘Capitalism, capitalism, capitalism’ and later editions blamed ‘Stress, stress, stress.’” Our Latina work group argued that in creating the cultural adaptation, we needed to restore more of the original balance of political analysis to content while recognizing that politically, times had changed and few of the world’s women were inspired by imposed political ideologies, whether feminist or socialist.

In creating an alternative framework for this rebalancing, we turned to Paolo Freire’s participatory education as a tool widely used in both

Latin American and U.S. Latino communities (Darder 2002; Freire 1994; Freire and Macedo 2000; Nieto 2003). We saw participatory education, with its use of testimonials on lived experience, emergent critical analysis of the politics of personal experience, accessible women's health information, and connection to activist resources as a tool that would preserve the fundamental structure of *OBOS*. However, participatory education formulates the connection between text and action with a greater emphasis on methodologies linking motivations, knowledge, and action. In participatory education, testimonial creates the groundwork for affirming experientially based knowledge. The power of the learner's experiential knowledge is expanded with egalitarian application of the teacher's tools for creating knowledge, which include both information and critical analysis of how what appear to be unique individual problems are fundamentally socially structured. More important, the *conscientization*, or awareness and critique of unjust circumstances, is accompanied by *annunciation* of what can be, in highlighting the successes of women working in many activist spheres (Freire 1994; Freire and Macedo 2000). In proposing to use participatory education as a culturally meaningful method of adaptation, we turned to a generative tool that continued to yield new learning as we used it to shift the book's center of gravity symbolically and pragmatically.

Why Were Latinas Left Out of the Conversation? **Expanding Latina Contributions to the Trialogue**

The shift to an explicit participatory education methodology as the foundation for updating and culturally adapting the text also helped us achieve a new understanding of the role of Latinas and other women of color in the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (BWHBC)'s struggle to become a more diverse, inclusive organization.⁹ The first edition of *OBOS* (1973) was translated into Spanish by Leonora Taboada and Raquel Salgado, and circulated widely in U.S. Latina communities and throughout Latin America. At that time, Elizabeth McMahon Herrera, a Colombian immigrant to the United States, joined the BWHBC and founded Amigas Latinas en Acción Pro-Salud (ALAS) as a working Latina collective that would generate a cultural adaptation of *OBOS* for use with U.S. Latinas. The working group very quickly changed their focus from generating an alternative culturally adapted text to generating culturally meaningful participatory methods for active education and community engagement. Within both BWHBC and ALAS, this shift to an emphasis on participatory methodology and use of culturally meaningful, accessible media in addition to text was interpreted as necessary for low literacy Latinas who lacked the educational skills to make use of a text whose increasingly

scientific information required a college education. For more than a decade, ALAS continued to work within BWHBC at the margins of the organization, with a very limited part-time staff member creating multimedia materials or conducting community-based theater workshops which were seen as only needed for U.S. Latinas and not for the organization's "traditional constituencies."¹⁰

As we clarified differences between BWHBC's priorities and perspectives embodied in *OBOs* as text and carried over into the *NCNV* work plan, our Latina work group revisited the structure of the adaptation with this fundamental question: what would happen if we privileged the Latin American and Latina point of view? We began to see ALAS as the medium for participatory community education and local organizing that would revitalize the link between text and action. As we began to directly contact our Latin American and Caribbean collaborators, we began to see new points of connection between our work and theirs, discovering ways we understood each other's culturally informed textual and political strategies. We had an opportunity to further develop these points of connection (*Puntos de Encuentro*) because the lengthened editorial process necessary to improve the initial poor translation coincided with new funding for the use of *NCNV* in community education settings.¹¹ Making the most of the opportunity presented by this new funding, we shifted the definition and organizational positioning of ALAS from remediation for low literacy Latinas to embodiment of the inspiring tools of translating words into action.¹² Using this reframing of the ALAS work, we revisited our library of Latin American and Caribbean materials in participatory health promotion and reproductive health, seeing more clearly the common threads connecting our Latina work in health promotion with the emphasis on methodology and media characterizing visions of learning and changing in our communities.

As we proceeded, we identified key organizations from different regions as consultants, using the BWHBC's links as part of a worldwide feminist network of activist groups and regional documentation centers.¹³ Initially, these collaborations were hampered by lack of Latina participation in international meetings. The adaptation plan had not included any opportunities for Latina project directors and editors to visit key groups and their documentation centers, building on the relationships with these groups established by BWHBC founders through their long history of movement participation. However, several of us were able to visit Taller Salud in Puerto Rico and its documentation center while visiting family on the island. Nirvana Gonzalez, who founded and directed Taller Salud's documentation center and was active in the regional movement from the first feminist Encuentros, became a crucial guide to key historical, conceptual, and methodological materials. Nirvana Gonzalez had participated in every regional Feminist Encuentro and proved to be

an essential guide to its key texts and their living history in the work of activist organizations throughout the region. She was especially aware of the lack of Caribbean representation on the board of the Latin American and Caribbean women's health network, and the regional imbalances and biases that resulted from this lack of representation. Because of Puerto Rico's unique location as a U.S. colony, yet with its own independent ties to Caribbean and Latin American feminist and political movements, we came to see Puerto Rican feminists as uniquely positioned to reflect on and inform the cultural adaptation's transnational perspective. Most Latinas on the editorial team were Puerto Rican or Caribbean-born and identified, and we began to examine regional tensions between more theoretically oriented feminist writings and writings emphasizing participation.

Although we didn't recognize the implications of our affinities and selections at the time, we kept returning to the writings of Latin American and Caribbean feminist organizations generated through processes involving both local grassroots community organizations and national/transnational policy and advocacy. These organizations provided community-based services while using community practice-based knowledge to nurture and inform their strategic policy and advocacy work in national, regional, and international forums. For example, Flora Tristan, a feminist organization based in Peru, sent us their publication in holistic health care, *De Salvia y Toronjil* (*Of Sage and Lemon Balm*), which included an eloquent yet accessible analysis of the consequences of medicalized, fragmented health services in interfering with holistic healing by silencing the wise voice of the healer within. Flora Tristan developed their feminist health center's guide to holistic health as part of delivering direct services to women in both urban and rural settings. At the same time, their organization has been centrally involved in global meetings, and Virginia Vargas, a Flora Tristan founder, was selected by regional activists as their representative for the 1995 United Nations meeting on the status of women in Beijing. When we received *De Salvia y Toronjil*, we were in the process of restructuring the order of chapters to better convey a progression from critique of the health care system to proposals for what might be possible. We had decided to move rewritten chapters on International Feminisms, Health Care Systems, and Organizing for Change to the beginning of the book from their location at the back of *OBOS* to be followed by the section Taking Care of Ourselves, which opens the book in English. We felt that a chapter on Holistic Health provided a clearer bridge to an alternative vision for health, and we substantially rewrote the chapter to include indigenous healing practices and forms of prayer as dimensions of integral or holistic health. Maria Marmo Skinner, production editor for *NCNV*, was a gifted artist and holistic health practitioner whose work resonated with the spirituality and poetics of the holistic health practice materials

created by members of Flora Tristan. We located and incorporated materials by other regional groups linking a sacred aesthetics of healing to their political organizing in health. As we re-visioned the Holistic Health chapter to emphasize the sacred healing arts, we learned that *OBOS* editors had chosen to omit all references to religion and spirituality, to avoid association either with anti-abortion politics or with nonscientific health care methods. Enhancing the connection between culturally based spiritual practices and feminist politics in health permitted us to introduce a woman-centered indigenous approach to spirituality in this and other chapters as an indispensable dimension of health for women in the region. For U.S. Latinas and other U.S. women of color, spirituality remains a critical resource for health.

Our selection of a culturally meaningful document denoting patient's rights offers another example of a document we selected for its content and only later came to appreciate for the participatory processes that achieved its accessible, inclusive tone and its empowering message of citizen participation and advocacy. The *OBOS* chapter on Health Systems includes an excellent but very detailed legalistic definition of patient's rights, written for a legal and medical audience and requiring a high level of education. We replaced this with a document titled *Declaration of Rights: Rights and Responsibilities of Users of Reproductive Health Services* written by Consorcio Mujer, a consortium of feminist organizations in Peru. We learned much later that the document had been generated by an extensive participatory process involving both users and providers of reproductive health services (Shepard 2002) and based on Consorcio Mujer's application of the concept of citizen participation and reproductive health and rights to quality care in reproductive services.

Although in working with Latin American and Caribbean women's health groups we were hampered by costly communications and limited opportunities for face-to-face collaboration, documenting the work of U.S. Latinas in reproductive health was hampered by lack of national organizations or regional networks with this focus. At the time, the National Latina Health Organization, based in Oakland, had remained active primarily in California. As we called groups around the country, conducting the outreach that would help us create a database of U.S. Latina activists, organizations, and resources, we found that most major U.S. Latino organizations maintained profoundly traditional views of gender roles and reproductive decision-making. At this phase of conceptualizing our goals and methods, we did not see our role as proactively generating organizational capacity, either within BWHBC or in building networks among existing Latina organizations. The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, developing a U.S. Latina agenda in reproductive health and rights, was beginning regional organizing in 1995, and invited our adaptation team to attend a New England meeting. Due to other work

obligations, none of us was able to attend. Upon reflection, I would now characterize our absence as a failure to give this collaboration and capacity-building meeting a high enough priority. Because our work plan failed to recognize the significance of these collaborative networks in nurturing, as well as reflecting, a U.S. Latina feminist movement to be embodied within *NCNV*. Three years later, at a different phase in the development of our methodology, we had a new appreciation of the links between the text and participation in building activist networks, and began to work more closely with the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health in connection with our local Latina organizing.¹⁴

Are Latinas U.S. or Third-World Feminists? Questioning the Inclusiveness of Latin American Feminisms

Our third irreverent question emerged as we immersed ourselves in the texts of the Latin American and Caribbean women's health movement, and confronted an enormous range of texts from different regions and branches of the feminist movement. Our editorial team of Latinas changed participants over time, and the group of seven co-editors coordinating the project differed in our nationalities, migration status, and level of Spanish language literacy. Within our work group, Puerto Rican women who had lived their own border-crossing experience of island and mainland were the best equipped to understand the Latin American and Caribbean feminist movement. Puerto Rican feminists had a long history of struggle with the issues of political and language sovereignty at stake in the translation adaptation project, and appreciated issues of dominance from both sides of the Americas. Puerto Rican feminists experienced discrimination from a Southern Cone-dominated Latin American movement as well as from U.S. feminist groups. For example, we were surprised to discover that many global health databases, such as the World Health Organization's Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) did not tabulate separate data for Puerto Rico because of its status as a U.S. territory. I, and other members of the editorial team who had immigrated to the United States as children, struggled with Spanish language literacy, finding some texts to be difficult in their use of intellectual, theoretical language and others to be lyrical and accessible. Over time, we realized that the Latin American feminist movement had its own historical and contemporary rifts, and we began to map the history and location of points of collaboration and divergence.

One especially useful resource for understanding this evolving, living feminist history in the region was the "*Memorias/Memories*," documenting regional feminist Encuentros/Encounters, several of which were published and distributed to regional documentation centers. The first

Encuentro was held in 1981 in Bogota, Colombia, the second in 1983 in Lima, Peru, the third in 1985 in Brazil, with subsequent Encuentros held every two to three years in rotation throughout the region (Alvarez et al. 2003). The tenth feminist Encuentro is currently being planned for October 2005, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The fourth Encuentro, held in Taxco, Mexico, in 1987, documented its extraordinary diversity and plurality through a collection of individual and group participant testimonials, images, policy reports, and poetry. Starting in 1996, with the seventh Encuentro in Chile, members of the Latina editorial team began to participate in these regional Encuentros, expanding our opportunity to join with and learn from these extraordinarily vibrant meetings and to incorporate these perspectives into our vision for the text as an expression of that movement. At the same time, we were struck by significant rifts representing struggles within the movement as well as evolving regional politics. In the Chile Encuentro in 1996, the organizers were strongly committed to financial autonomy from government and foundation sources, and issued a controversial mandate that no participants could attend who received funds from these sources. The receipt of government or foundation funds was seen as compromising to the integrity of their feminist projects. The subsequent discussion, carried on in early electronic forums and documented in a special issue of the Uruguayan feminist magazine *Cotidiano Mujer*, brought forward an important critique of the risks involved in the institutionalization of regional feminism, a critique that became destructively acrimonious.

A grant supporting connections between U.S. Latina and Latin American feminist organizations permitted our Latina work group's attendance at the Dominican Republic Encuentro of 1999 to identify opportunities for collaboration using NCNV as a tool for shared activism in women's health and rights. The Dominican Encuentro followed our ALAS/NCNV gatherings of Latinas working in feminist health promotion in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Brooklyn, New York, and I felt fortunate to have Nirvana Gonzalez and Eugenia Acuña, a founder of Taller Salud now living and working in New York City, and collaborators in those meetings, as guides at the Encuentro. Steeped in their own long trajectory as border-crossing feminists within the movement, they helped me navigate the Encuentro, identify women whom I had come to "know" from reading their texts, select significant workshops, and interpret critical events in light of the Encuentro's history. After the painfully divisive 1996 Encuentro in Chile, the organizing committee worked to create a forum for healing and unity by incorporating participatory methodologies into all the workshops as a way of encouraging full involvement by women from different sectors, communities of feminist work, and levels of education.

In previous Encuentros, U.S. Latinas had been registered as "foreign" participants, but the more than 100 Dominican women residing in the

United States and attending the Encuentro refused to accept that designation, insisting that they were Dominican women wherever in the world they lived. As the first Encuentro held in the Caribbean, the meeting drew a substantial delegation of Francophone women, especially Haitian, and women from the English-speaking Caribbean. However, the organizing committee failed to organize translation for these participants, and did not consider the political dynamics of exclusion in light of Dominican policies of discrimination against Haitians. During the introductory plenary at which all participants were gathered, the Haitian women seized the microphone, confronted the organizing committee on their failure to consider this linguistic exclusion and its political and racial dimensions, and threatened to walk out of the Encuentro. Their statement was supported by nearly every participant, who noisily supported their declarations and threatened to leave the plenary in solidarity. Initially defensive, members of the organizing committee quickly acknowledged the ways the failure to provide translation was a failure of political vision rather than a lack of resources.

An additional point of contention in the Dominican Encuentro grew out of the emphasis on participatory methods at the workshops, which led a group of participants interested in discussing political movement strategy more directly to convene a workshop in the hotel's discotheque. Attended by 100 women of many backgrounds and ages, this meeting offered an unexpected opportunity to voice my concerns as a U.S. Latina to the creators of many of the texts that had informed, enriched, and transformed our work. The meeting, organized as a dialogue on next steps in the movement, was opened to all who wished to speak with the goal of articulating points of agreement and controversy concerning next steps. Speaking from my position as an *NCNV* editor, I thanked participants for their contributions to our work while pleading with them to consider the accessibility of their political texts, many of which remained theoretically abstract and difficult to read with our U.S. border-crossing Spanish. I felt the greatest resonance with the statements from the network of women in feminist communications, who similarly pleaded with the need to more systematically include media strategies as part of their political work. The Dominican Encuentro lacked communications access for representatives of the media, which feminist communications specialists from the region felt was emblematic of the low priority given to this critical movement strategy. I was also struck by the recurrent theme of missed opportunities to engage intergenerational relationships and the need to pass the torch of activism, a theme I was especially attuned to because of the difficulties encountered by so many feminist organizations in involving the next generation.

One particularly poignant series of exchanges occurred as parallel concerns that never became an engaged dialogue. A group of young feminists

posed their concern that a new generation was learning about the movement through academic and nongovernmental organizations (NGO) settings without feeling the vital engagement with the lived experience of activism and longed-for mentorship in those roles to the senior, established women in the movement. A well-known figure in the movement responded jokingly, "Don't worry, youth is a temporary condition," an intervention that unfortunately only served to confirm young feminists's worry that their concerns would not be taken seriously. Another well-known participant in the movement spoke of her fears as one among many single women confronting old age and finding that their nontraditional lives dedicated to building a movement left them alone, without the traditional resources of husbands and extended family. The work of incorporating diverse women, young women, and women from the U.S. diasporas was greatly advanced at the Dominican Encuentro but remained a work in progress.

In the Costa Rica Encuentro of 2002, a strong representation of Feminist Radio and a sophisticated communications strategy emphasized a balance of theory, methods of political development, communications and learning, self-care, and the healing arts. The conference focused on globalization, with a careful balance of plenaries offering sophisticated analysis on globalization by established scholars and activists in the field and participatory workshops addressing very diverse issues. I was drawn to a workshop on transnationalism, whose description in the catalogue offered a forum to talk about how Latin American and Caribbean women living and working in diaspora could contribute to the work of the movement. I sat in a circle under an open-air tent on the beach with twenty other women, all of us waiting for the facilitator. When we learned that because the facilitator's flight had been delayed she would not be arriving, the group began to disband. Suggesting that we not leave but instead stay and explore the questions bringing us together to see whether we could build a dialogue based on those questions, I became the group's facilitator and recorder. Our group included women from Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Argentina living in Europe; European women living and working in Latin America; Latin American academics working on transnational migration; and me, as a Cuban American living in the United States and redefining my life and work within a transnational feminist movement in the region. We titled our session "*Las Ventajas de ser Desarraigadas/The Advantages of Being Uprooted*," appreciating our multiple perspectives on the lived experience of globalization in contributing to the Encuentro's themes. Although the session included our complicated subjectivities on transnationalism, we used these to discuss the role of transnational organizing strategies in furthering feminism at a newly dangerous intersection. Participants were divided on the value of the great investment in the Beijing meeting and in other international forums.

Our dialogue affirmed the importance of communications and organizational networks that helped us maintain our connections to one another. We noted the great diversity of our positions at the margins or at the centers of power, and wondered how we could make use of these different positions constructively. A Colombian woman living in Belgium who worked for an NGO that provided funding to transnational organizing worked to create a bridge to Colombia throughout her private life and professional work. One participant, originally from Spain and living in Guatemala, joined with others to comment that we were using old paradigms of North/South while confronting new conditions of discrimination and injustice under new political economies. One participant who had been to Beijing and worked in rural Brazil used a forum of monthly meetings to sustain momentum and participation in women's issues in her community. Some workshop participants expressed a great frustration with the location of the conference at a costly resort, and the ways costs limited the participation of many women's organizations at a time when funders were carefully selecting priorities for funding. A Honduran participant offered an optimistic example of the ways her Center for Women's Studies had succeeded in involving rural women in advocacy by using the Global Women's March as a vehicle for working locally on women's employment and labor rights. Their center organized a campaign event that helped them identify participants who could work from their own rural areas, decentering their networks, which had previously been centered in the capital of Tegucigalpa. She noted that in Honduras, banana plantations, mining, and *maquiladoras* had long ago "transnationalized" and "globalized" women's lives and work by creating the split between wealthy far-away owners and desperately poor local workers. In their labor advocacy work, they could not turn to the neoliberal state as it worked in collusion with global capital. However, feminist activists found a helpful community of solidarity in first-world consumers who did not want to purchase *ropa sucia*, or tainted clothing, made through the labor of exploited workers. We closed with the affirmation that each of us may place only so many bricks, and some of the bricks may fall, but together we can build something massive and enduring.

By attending the Encuentros, I began to appreciate in new ways the long-standing debates concerning the role of broader women's organizations within a dedicated feminist movement and how different approaches to political organizing generated debates about political inclusiveness, social class, and race. As our ALAS/NCNV team came to appreciate these cultural and political complexities and histories, we were better able to engage them and strategically select textual materials and political voices. In engaging these activists and movements as living, evolving individuals and organizations rather than as information and text, we began to experience the text itself as a transnational border crosser that

held within its bound pages the representation of our participation in that movement. Our words in the text began to embody and invoke that movement. Together we recognized the many pathways by which diverse women might encounter the text and use it to learn about themselves in solidarity with their communities by sharing their stories and struggling together for their rights.

Puerto Rico as Bridge to Transnational Feminism in the Americas

Throughout our work of cultural adaptation, we kept returning to the critical role of Puerto Rican feminists as bridging U.S. Latina and Latin American and Caribbean feminisms in expanding the potential for transnational collaborations. During nearly twenty years of participation in local, regional, and global feminist movements, Nirvana Gonzalez had advocated for the development of a documentation center with key texts from organizations all over the region. In the chapter on Health Systems in *NCNV*, we reprinted a political analysis written by Gonzalez to address how Taller Salud's founders had selected women's health as the political medium for a feminist transformation of gender justice and social change (see *NCNV* 2000, 45–6). Recognizing the importance of locally based feminist organizations in Puerto Rico as links both to U.S. Latina and to regional and global women's health movements, we used the funding opportunity offered by an organizing grant from the Open Society Institute's U.S. reproductive health initiative to expand our learning about programs and their health promotion methodologies linked to political activism. In July 1999, as we were writing the final introductions to *NCNV*, we visited San Juan and held meetings with feminist activists and organizations working throughout the island. Taller Salud founding director Laura Colon drove us to two small rural towns where we experienced a dramatic highlighting of the relational and political differences between a grassroots empowerment approach and a professionalized social services approach to work with women experiencing domestic violence.

I have two enduring images from that visit, as the contrast between the two settings. In the self-organized group, called Cimarronas/Run-Away Slaves, we were ushered into an open communal dining room where the women offered us a lunch they prepared in honor of our visit. As we sat around the table, they described the near closing of their domestic violence center and their determination to contribute volunteer time and resources to keeping it open so they could share the sense of safety and learning they experienced with other women. In the professionalized domestic violence center, we were brought into a traditional human services waiting room

while we waited for the director. While we waited, we made friendly eye contact with a woman sitting across from us. A few minutes later, her counselor entered hurriedly and approached the waiting woman with no apology. The employee's demeanor conveyed the self-important posture and formality of a trained professional. As they walked away into a private room for a counseling session, the counselor loudly stated, "Now let's get started to see if we can do something about your problems." Although our colleagues in Taller Salud had deliberately selected these two centers for their contrasting approaches, we did not expect to see the consequences of empowerment versus a clinical approach exposed so starkly. Our conversations with participants and staff at both these sites emphasized the dangers of drifting toward professionalization in providing social services rather than promoting social justice. These two visits reinforced the vital importance of protecting community participation as a means of sustaining the integrity of feminist emancipatory projects as organizations engage funders, influence governments, and become involved in transnational advocacy networks and strategies (see Alvarez 2000; Minkler and Wallerstein 2004; Torres and Cernada 2003). These visits with Puerto Rican feminists and their organizations, at a time when we were finalizing the final introductions in the text, inspired us to build "an altar of words" invoking connections between *NCNV* as a text, the ALAS approach to methodology, and the work of Taller Salud and other Puerto Rican feminists using health promotion as a feminist tool.

Lessons Learned: Latina Organizing—Linking Local and Global Strategies

The Latina re-visionings and lessons learned in this final section are more of a work in progress than a finished product. Our Latina ALAS/*NCNV* work group's vision of a transnational collaborative process, emphasizing participatory methodologies, was successful in transforming *NCNV* as text. However, we were not as successful in helping to shift the organizational priorities of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective or their approach to the book in English.¹⁵ At the time of the organization's 1999 strategic planning, I organized a panel on women of color's vision of participation in community organizing to articulate a vision of the book's potential not just as a mirror but as a tool for movement building, applicable not only for Latinas but for diverse women working in cross-racial coalitions. We suggested that an updating of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* consistent with the work of *NCNV* required de-emphasizing the text as an encyclopedic resource and emphasizing participatory methodologies, systematic community outreach, and coalition building, along with the use of multiple media and new technologies. Significantly, the South

African Women's Health Project, whose visually beautiful and pedagogically accessible women's health book based on *OBOS* provided our editorial work group with an inspiring example, chose not to publish a second edition of their book, emphasizing instead the creation of adaptable materials for use in their community health promotion workshops. Without a shift in the organization's priorities, the work on *NCNV* within *Our Bodies, Ourselves* as an organization has rested on the shoulders of a single Latina, and has emphasized development of a public health curriculum for use by *promotoras*. While this is an extremely valuable first step, it falls far short of actualizing our vision of transnational organizing by using *NCNV* as a tool, which remains a work in progress.

The following summary reflects our *ALAS/NCNV* work group's re-visioning of work in women's health promotion for personal and social change. Consistent with new work in culturally based community health promotion (Minkler and Wallerstein 2004; Torres and Cernada 2003), these re-visionings emphasize leadership development (Shapiro and Leigh 2005/in press) and active health citizenship (Shepard 2002) as methodologies that shift the emphasis from health information as content to health as a human right and a matter of gender and social justice.

Latina Leadership Development in Gender, Culture, and Reproductive Health and Rights: Vision/Mission of Health Promotion for Leadership Development and Social Change

- Health promotion education, to be culturally meaningful, relevant to women's own lives, and effective in mobilizing personal and community change, needs to start with women's own stated needs and concerns; speak our language using culturally meaningful images and sacred healing arts; and use these as a pathway for identifying strengths and resources with which to solve our own problems in solidarity with others.
- Culturally meaningful health promotion connects body with mind, spirit, and community; promotes active engagement in a shared vision of change; and supports women making connections and building relationships to other women and to their communities to create the conditions promoting health.
- The first priority of health promotion education is to offer women the support and sense of self-efficacy that will help use available resources and advocate for new culturally and community-based resources to address sources of distress and ill-health while promoting vibrant well-being.
- Access to health care is redefined as, first and foremost, women's access to resources within their own communities that contribute to

improved health, and only secondarily as access to the existing health care system with its many barriers for diverse women users.

- Collaboration requires that we work across professional and community boundaries, get to know other groups' strengths and resources, and participate in an "exchange of gifts."
- Women educators, outreach workers, and administrators first need to connect with ourselves and each other to become aware of the implications of injustices as burdens and barriers to wellness in our own lives, and begin a process of mutual healing.
- The international and third-world women's health movements can help invigorate and inspire Latinas and other women from U.S. communities of color who have not felt a connection to the North American feminist movement.
- Latin American and Caribbean women's health activists offer U.S. Latinas working in health promotion for gender justice and social change a culturally compatible approach to building activist networks and methods for designing culturally meaningful materials for health promotion education grounded in participatory education principles and linked to the women, communities, and movements creating them.

Expanding the Borderlands: Transnational Opportunities for U.S. Latinas in Gender, Culture, and Health

As a faculty member in psychology and Latino studies at an urban public university, I have returned to this public university as a home base for developing the next steps in transnational collaborations emphasizing campus and community collaborations. Learning from my transnational community to make the best of both worlds, I have come to appreciate the advantages of my privileged location at a third-world university, remembering the words of Leopoldina Rendon, director of the documentation center at the Mexican feminist organization *Comunicacion, Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en America Latina/Communication, Interchange and Human Development in Latin America (CIDHAL)*: "We are poor in material resources, but rich in human resources." Among the states initiating the most significant cuts in public higher education, Massachusetts was one of only two states to have increased the gap between rich and poor during the boom years, and it is home to one of the poorest and one of the youngest Latino populations in the United States. The University of Massachusetts at Boston is also the most racially diverse four-year college in New England, and home to an inspiring array of ethnic minority and public policy institutes with significant community partnerships. Among these friends, I have initiated a home for my transnational work in Latina health promotion within a project in gender, culture, and health at the

Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Public Policy, which is part of an inter-university program in Latino research, a network of Latino research institutes linked to community constituencies.¹⁶ The project emphasizes participatory health promotion methodologies; a view of gender justice as good for both men and women; inclusion of a spiritual perspective in reproductive health and rights; and *ciudadanía*/citizenship concepts of political participation. The project aims to create strategic partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally, emphasizing development of multimedia materials, outreach campaigns, and participatory action research in gender justice, health promotion, and social change. The projects support initiatives and programs in leadership development, network organizing, and capacity building using Latin American models and methods of *ciudadanía*/citizenship and health promotion in reproductive health and rights (Palomino 2002; Shepard 2002, 2003; Thayer 2000); definitions of reproductive justice and human rights meaningful in local Latino/a communities; family-friendly and spiritually based feminisms; and health promotion approaches to family health using cultural strengths.

I am currently working as participatory program evaluator with Entre Nosotras. This program is a culturally meaningful Spanish language HIV prevention program for Latinas, using community *promotoras* to conduct workshops on healthy sexuality and empowerment. Entre Nosotras operates in partnership with Mujeres Unidas, a community-based Latina adult education and empowerment center, and with Iris Rivera, founder of Casa Iris, who opened Boston's conversation for Latinas living with AIDS and striving to transform their communities. In the spirit of creating communities in which economic hardship and family violence do not blight the possibilities for love given and received in women's lives and for generations to come, Entre Nosotras uses lessons learned the hard way but shared generously with other women. I had the honor of traveling to the March for Women's Lives with the Boston Latina delegation organized by Maridena Rojas, project director for Entre Nosotras. I served as their translator when Rojas and community activist Jacqueline Peña presented their work at the Latina Summit organized by the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health.

As a university-based Latina and academic activist, my vision of what is possible has been nourished by the extraordinary women I met through my travels with *Nuestros Cuerpos*, *Nuestras Vidas*, and the projects they introduced me to. I take example and inspiration from the Latin American Women's Health Network's Universidad Itinerante/Itinerant University, envisioned and until recently directed by Maria Isabel Matamala, a Chilean feminist who co-directed the Latin American Women's Health Network (RSMLAC) and currently works at the Pan American Health Organization on monitoring the impact of health sector privatization on women's health. Itinerant University is an educational and capacity

building campus/community collaboration held throughout the region, which brings together a local women's organization, a local activist university, and the Latin American Women's Health Network to design workshops that will offer training in gender justice and health while establishing and strengthening collaborative networks. I also look to the Regional Training Program in Politics and Public Policy (PRIGEPP), a virtual educational program in capacity building and leadership development for women's participation in governance and policy founded by Gloria Bonder. Conducted virtually, it is physically located at Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales/Latin American Faculty in Social Sciences (FLACSO), the regional social sciences faculty at its Buenos Aires, Argentina campus (<http://www.prigepp.org/site/home.asp>). Finally, we are inspired by a world of work in Latin American and Caribbean activism in women's health and rights (see Chant and Craske 2003; Shepard 2003; Stephen 1997; Thayer 2000). Our inspiration extends also to global feminism, to which we bring our unique local perspectives and our solidarity.

Acknowledgments

Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas represents the loving labor of many hands and passionate activism of many communities; I want to thank my colleagues on the Latina editorial committee, in ALAS throughout the years, the founders, staff, and board of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective/Our Bodies, Ourselves, our Latin American and Caribbean collaborators (listed at http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/ncnv_eng.htm), and the Entre Nosotras community at Action for Boston Community Development.

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Notes

1. Zavella (2002) describes the “peripheral vision” of everyday transnationalism as women working in canneries and food industries at the U.S./Mexico border evaluate shifting economic and political contingencies to determine where they will move in pursuit of their family’s economic survival; Naples and Desai (2002) review vocabularies, definitions and strategies for connecting global transnational movements with local strategies of “transnationalism from below”; Thayer (2001) describes how women’s organizations in the Brazilian *sertao* (backlands) appropriated and transformed concepts from an urban Brazilian feminist organization, themselves translating and transforming U.S. feminist concepts.
2. Complex systems theory approaches to women’s empowerment through health promotion use concepts from ecologies of human development in living systems to describe “virtuous circles” in which resource-rich environments protect and promote positive development, in contrast to “vicious circles” in which depriving, violent, and unjust circumstances increase exposure to risks and stressors undermining capacities for development; see Kar, Pascual, and Chickering 1999; Kar et al. 2002; Shapiro 1994/2005 (in press); Shapiro and Leigh 2005 (in press).
3. Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1940/1995) proposed the construct of transculturation as an alternative to Malinowski’s acculturation in describing new forms created by cultural encounters in Cuba and the Caribbean.
4. For detailed discussion of these organizational transitions, see Main (1997); for detailed description of the organizational strategies permitting the transformation of the NCNV adaptation, see Shapiro (2005/in preparation).
5. Similarly, I describe “strategic reflection” as a method for assessing barriers and leveraging resources in achieving desired goals under circumstances of oppression, changing the contexts for one’s own contingent development (Shapiro 2005/in preparation; Shapiro and Leigh 2005/in press).
6. A group of U.S. Latinas formed Amigas Latinas en Accion (ALAS) in 1979, initially to generate a cultural adaptation of the 1976 Spanish translation for use by U.S. Latinas, but continued their work with an emphasis on participatory education using media; see later discussion of the changing role of ALAS in the organization.
7. For detailed discussion of these organizational transitions see Main (1997); for detailed description of the organizational strategies permitting the transformation of the NCNV adaptation, see Shapiro (2005/in preparation).
8. In addition to Sandoval (2000), see Zavella (2002) on peripheral vision; Moya argues that U.S. women of color have contributed to a collective project of

social change by developing a distinctive border-crossing critical consciousness characterized by the capacity to learn from difference and demonstrating "the viability of, and methods involved in, creating coalitions across difference" (2002, 97).

9. The December 1997 issue of *Sojourner* includes an open letter from Boston Women's Health Book Collective women of color who had resigned from the organization after highly contentious battles over its racial inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability; a response from the board of directors (which I co-signed as a member of the new diverse board); and an analysis of the organizational processes involved by Shelly Main, based on interviews with former and current staff, founders, and board.
10. As a board member involved in the organization's strategic planning, I was part of an intense debate on who constituted the organization's constituencies and whether they overlapped with the purchasers of current *OBOS* editions.
11. Puntos de Encuentro is the name of a Nicaraguan feminist organization specializing in young women's political participation and popular education methods <http://www.puntos.org.ni/>.
12. This re-visioning of ALAS and its vital relationship to *NCNV* was supported by funding from the Boston Foundation, which subsidized local community workshops and local development of a Latina health network; and by funding from the Open Society Institute supporting U.S. Latina organizing nationally and transnationally, using *NCNV* and its activist networks.
13. Colleagues at regional documentation centers included Nirvana Gonzalez at Taller Salud in Puerto Rico; Isabel Duques and colleagues at ISIS international in Chile who run the Latin American Women's Health Information Center, making activist databases and documents available regionally; Leonora Rendon and colleagues Comunicacion, Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en America Latina/Communication, Interchange and Human Development in Latin America (CIDHAL) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, with its own women's health programs and a thriving regional documentation center; Adrianna Gomez and colleagues at the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network/RSMLAC in Chile, publishing a quarterly women's health magazine, coordinating regional activist campaigns, and maintaining a data base of women's health organizations in the region; Cecilia Olivares and colleagues at Centro de Informacion y Desarrollo de la Mujer/Center for Women's Information and Development (CIDEM) in Bolivia, at that time coordinating the Latin American regional campaign to legalize abortion; and Elsa Gomez Gomez, director of the Pan American Health Organization's Women and Development Section.
14. After a period of reorganization, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health has relocated from Washington, D.C., to Brooklyn, New York and changed its methods of work to emphasize grassroots leadership development,

community organizing, and coalition building that supports their national policy work in Latina reproductive health and rights, described at <http://www.latinainstitute.org/mission.html>.

15. The organization changed its name from Boston Women's Health Book Collective (BWHBC) to Our Bodies, Ourselves to emphasize the centrality of the text in their public recognition and their organizational priorities.
16. The Inter University Program in Latino Research is housed at Notre Dame University, <http://www.nd.edu/~iuplr/>.

Resource References

- Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas: NCVN* is available for bulk ordering of clinic discount copies, and the webpage has a free, downloadable guide for its use in health promotion workshops, information, and contact person at <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org>.
- Entre Nosotras: a community-based Latina HIV prevention program promoting healthy sexuality and gender equality, housed at Action for Boston Community Development, Health Programs at <http://www.bostonabcd.org/programs/health-programs.htm#ent>.
- Gender, Culture, and Health Project: at Mauricio Gaston Institute, University of Massachusetts, Boston: (617) 287-5790, Ester Shapiro, Director; <http://www.gaston.umb.edu>.
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health: a U.S. Latina reproductive health and rights organization; <http://www.latinainstitute.org/mission.html>.

Latin American Feminist and Women's Health Activism

- Red de Salud de America Latina y el Caribe (Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network): activist network organizes regional campaigns, connects groups, publishes a magazine and online interactive fact sheet monitoring status of women at <http://www.reddesalud.web.cl>.
- ISIS Internacional: feminist documentation center, and Internet site for networks on violence against women and on feminist media and communications; <http://www.isis.cl>.
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO): Latin American and Caribbean World Health's Organization regional network, webpage has information on the region; see especially their gender, health, and development resources at <http://www.paho.org>; see also their equity and health listserv, EQUIDAD@LISTSERV.PAHO.ORG.
- Red de Educacion Popular Entre Mujeres (Network for Women's Popular Education) (REPEM): publications emphasize women's health and economic empowerment; <http://www.repem.ur>.

Global Women of Color Feminist Organizations

Development of Women for a New Era (DAWN) is a network of women scholars and activists from the economic South who engage in feminist research and analysis of the global environment and are committed to working for economic justice, gender justice, and democracy. DAWN works globally and regionally in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific on the themes of the political economy of globalization; political restructuring and social transformation; sustainable livelihoods; and sexual and reproductive health and rights, in partnership with other global NGOs and networks. Their webpage posts extensive information on activist projects, monitoring of global accords, and publications at <http://www.dawn.org.fj/>.

International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC): provides HERA (Health, Action, Empowerment, Rights and Accountability) action sheets on Cairo and Beijing agreements and monitoring, gender equity and empowerment, women and adolescents' sexual and reproductive rights and health, men's role and responsibility for sexual and reproductive rights and health, and abortion. Action sheets available at <http://www.iwhc.org/hera/index.htm>.

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