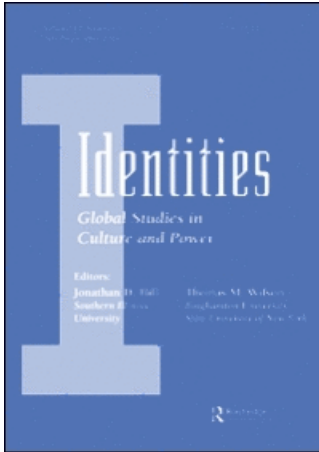


This article was downloaded by:[University of Toronto]
On: 5 November 2007
Access Details: [subscription number 769429897]
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Identities

Global Studies in Culture and Power

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713663307>

Social Suffering and Embodied States of Male Transnational Migrancy in San Francisco, California

Valentina Napolitano Quayson^a

^a Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, U.K.

Online Publication Date: 01 July 2005

To cite this Article: Quayson, Valentina Napolitano (2005) 'Social Suffering and Embodied States of Male Transnational Migrancy in San Francisco, California', *Identities*, 12:3, 335 - 362

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/10702890500203231

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10702890500203231>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article maybe used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Social Suffering and Embodied States of Male Transnational Migrancy in San Francisco, California

Valentina Napolitano Quayson

Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, U.K.

Through the analysis of a social program for migrant and homeless labourers, this article focuses on embodiment, suffering, and the changing nature of masculinity in a specific Latino migrant population in San Francisco. It highlights particular aspects of personhood while relating migrant narratives of this singular “lonely” population to aspects of current political economy and articulations of social suffering. It explores how spatial and temporal conditions such as “shifting suffering,” “being stuck,” being betrayed, and “conformarse” (conforming) highlight embodied states of changing masculinity and transnational migrancy. Through an examination of belonging and exclusion, continuities as well as discontinuities of representations, self-validation, and a nostalgia for a possibility of a future that cannot be and a present that still remains, this article presents a much-needed ethnography of embodied affects emerging in different arenas of transnational migrancy.

Key Words: transnational labour, masculinity, Latinos, suffering, homelessness, San Francisco

Felipe (in Spanish): Have you heard of ‘el virus urbano’? *Los Latinos* believe that there is a ‘virus urbano’ here [San Francisco], which is different and stronger because people in this city are more compact. This virus is weaker in Los Angeles and in the countryside. My parents live in the countryside and they do not get it so strong.

This article explores the embodied state of transnational migrancy by looking at the experience of belonging and social suffering among a daily labour Latino¹ migrant population in San Francisco, California. This focus aims to shed new light on the relations between a specific segment of the transnational labour market, migrants’ gendered subjectivity, and their embodied affects. The Latino migration I discuss here is a particular case. It constitutes a “lonely” migration that has been experiencing homelessness.

An established body of literature argues that recent Latino migration, and more specifically Mexican migration to the United States,

shows great reliance on extended family networks for housing, job provision, and general “survival” (Chavez 1990; Glick 1999; Massey 1990) as well as the centrality of trust in transnational migrant circuits (Kivisto 2001: 568). This article does not wish to argue against the existence of these networks, but it foregrounds the reality of a part of the migrant population that is falling through a safety kinship net. Although others have already suggested that we should challenge the underlying assumption that “networks always provide a haven support for immigrants” (Menjivar 1995: 219), I suggest the need for more ethnographic engagement with a particular transnational migrant experience that emerges through the disjunction of the reproduction of kinship networks and social cohesion.

In this “lonely” migration, masculinity appears to be shaped by heterogeneous images and representations of the homeland and often-conflicting interactions with social services. Changing migrant masculinity emerges from a commonality and divergence of experiences across the United States/Mexican border in matters of self-validation, belonging, and memory. Since transnational migrancy constitutes both a reproduction of and a challenge to the borders of the nation-state, I want to focus attention on the affects and also the embodiment that mark these processes. Here, affects are the unfolding of ties, bonds, and desires within a capitalist economy that both produces and consumes identities. These bonds and desires are part of an economy of exchange where persons are constituted by social relations and by what is exchanged, owned, and lost through them. This particular angle of affects contributes to an ethnography of the political economy of the body (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987) in a transnational space and to an understanding of particular moral dimensions of the transnational.

A focus on migrancy recalls a state of departure, but not of arrival in the host country (Chambers 1994). It explores the development of complex migrant subjectivities through their narratives of displacement and relocation. This complexity rests on a paradox of migration in late capitalism²: the migrant’s desire for modernity often collides with the migrant’s actual experience of exclusion from the “benefits” of modernity (Lawson 2000). Whilst the response to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has partially reinforced nationalistic sentiments in both Mexico and the United States,³ NAFTA and other forms of globalisation of the market are having an effect on the rise of transnational labour mobility across the Mexican/United States border (Gledhill 1995, 1998b). When related to the formation of “renewed” migrant identities—such as ethnicity—this phenomenon has been read either as a sign of a possible breakdown of the unity of the

nation-state (Kearney 1991) or as the *de facto* recreation of exploitative capitalist relations that need ethnic and racial diversity as well as divisions in order to reproduce national and multinational economic power (Basch et al. 1994). Moreover, further theorising of transnational migration is refocusing our attention on new transnational social spaces, on how economic and cultural processes inform the relationship between immigration and exclusion *as well as* inclusion in both sending and receiving countries (Kivisto 2001: 572–573). Hence, transnationalism can open up new forms of political and cultural participation in civil society. Through the use of innovative technologies, new forms of participation in civil society are simultaneously constructed in the homeland and the host-land (Smith 1998), and they may give expressions to novel forms of “cultural citizenship.” Cultural citizenship may emerge from an area of social inequality (between native citizens and migrants) by addressing “subordinate aspirations for definitions of enfranchisement” (Rosaldo 1997: 37).

However, transnational migrants do not always form “communities” that share a particular class, gender, or ethnic position, nor can their practice be always read as cultural processes that strive for enfranchisement. Transnationalism can actually be a field of divisiveness through these supposed common positions and, in some cases, as is the case of the “lonely” and often homeless male migrants presented below, it is more useful to think in terms of “a complex transnational field of action” (Guarnizo and Diaz 1999: 416) rather than homogenous transnational communities. By focusing on some important aspects of embodied states of transnational migrancy, as they emerge through a gendered experience of a transnational field,⁴ as well as on an ethnographic heterogeneity of a socially incohesive transnational field, this article wishes to contribute to existing debates on transnationalism.

The material of this article draws on four months of fieldwork that took place between January–March and July–September 1999 as well as follow-up visits in spring 2000 and summer 2001. The research was carried out through structured interviews and informal discussions with a core as well as a changing population of migrants. Overall, I approached and exchanged information, filled in application forms for jobs, helped people to make phone calls, and interpreted some of the legal paperwork with around forty male migrants passing through the trailer. I followed and interviewed closely a dozen migrants and I visited some of them in their temporary accommodation and their rented rooms, but I always preferred to talk and meet with them in public places. The migrants’ quotes in this text are translated from Spanish and the names of people have been changed for confidentiality, while names of organisations and locations have not.

On the trailers

I first need to say a few words about Felipe and the project in which he was involved. Felipe is a second-generation Mexican, who has been working with labour migrants for over ten years. Very much “on the ball,” he can be both soft spoken and extremely articulate, as well as being able to switch to a very street-wise and harsh way of speaking when he has to deal with “problems” of violence and drug-dealing that are daily encounters among this male migrant population. Felipe is an organiser/social worker, the on-site head of a Day Labour Program (referred to throughout as DLP) that was created in June 1989 by the City and County of San Francisco.

The program, which is administrated by the Immigrant Rights Coalition, is supported by an annually renewed grant from the city of San Francisco (the 1999 annual budgets in 1999 and 2000 were around \$100,000). However, the DLP program was on the point of closure for a few years under an alleged accusation of fund mismanagement, but subsequently, regular running of the program was resumed. The program is physically located in two trailers in the middle of Franklin Square Park in the Mission District.

The Mission District has been an important migrant community district in the heart of San Francisco since the beginning of the twentieth century. This district was first predominantly Irish—up to the Second World War—and since the middle 1950s has become a Latino and partly Filipino neighbourhood (Godfrey 1988). During military dictatorships in Central America, the neighbourhood saw a consistent flow of refugee migrants (especially from Salvador and Nicaragua). Since the middle 1990s there has been a renewed presence of newly arrived Mexican migrants—a migrant population who has also settled in well-known, low-income East Bay neighbourhoods such as Fruitvale in Oakland.

Processes of class diversification and the gentrification of the Mission District are taking place due to an unprecedented increase in San Francisco land and housing prices. However, many Latino families renting in this neighbourhood in the 1990s were still living below the poverty line (LATSTAT 1996). From the time of the Mission Coalition Organization in the early 1970s, the Mission District has witnessed a growing network of neighbourhood organisations and social services to improve job security and access to healthcare and education among both the legal and illegal Latino population.⁵ In the early 2000s, one of the main struggles in the neighbourhood, which has resulted in social mobilisation, has been the issue of gentrification. The case of the Mission is not unique in the San Francisco landscape. It resonates with other

neighbourhoods where a lack of urban planning has created a very critical unbalance between affordable housing and the expansion of dot.com offices and the new economy's business premises.⁶

My original interest in the program was to understand the migrant "state of health" in relation to different options available (allopathic, complementary, and folk medicines) chosen by different segments of the transnational migrant population (Napolitano 2001). The DLP also represented a very conducive environment in which to engage in lengthy and repeated discussions and interaction with migrant labourers, especially those who used to attend the program regularly. As a woman, and often as the only woman in the trailer where the project is located, I had to negotiate my space as a "researcher." Due to my "Latina" look and my acquaintance with Mexican everyday urban living (Napolitano 2002), I gradually came to represent a certain degree of "safeness": a person to talk to about the adventures and misadventures of life across the border.⁷

The migrant population that attended the DLP normally spoke little English and was originally from Mexico and Central America. Their age range was from late teens to early seventies. I particularly focused my research on Mexican migrants who had varied educational backgrounds and places of origin. They came from both urban and rural areas (mainly Zacatecas, Jalisco, Nayarit, Michoacán, the Federal District, and some from the Guatemalan and Mexican Mayan region). However, it emerged that, if they were originally from villages and ranches, they had often already internally migrated and tried their luck in bigger urban or metropolitan areas in Mexico. Some had labour experience in agricultural tasks, but had preferred to look for work in the urban area of San Francisco rather than in rural areas of California. Many held the belief that migrant life in the American countryside was very hard work with very little possibility for upward labour mobility.

The DLP

The DLP is one among several other social service organisations in the Mission that develop their projects to a greater or lesser extent through outreach workers. The aims of the DLP are to organise recently arrived Latino migrants in their search for daily work and to provide information about social services, immigration agencies, and, at the beginning, English language courses. The objective is to create a link between work offers and demand for labour by taking people into the DLP and away from the well-known avenue south of the Mission (Cesar Chavez Avenue) where they would gather early in the morning, waiting to be picked up as casual day labourers. Much

exploitation of this labour force and frictions with local residential dwellers of Cesar Chavez take place around this migrant Latino labour's "picking up" off the street (Quesada 1999). Hence, the idea behind the DLP project is to defend the rights of fair pay and insured work for this highly exposed population who are often homeless and, secondly, to defuse some of the conflicts between this population and local residents.

The rules of the program are quite strict: people need to sign a work roster every morning; those at the top of the list will be the ones called for the incoming work offers and once they receive an assignment, their name will be put at the bottom of the list. Those who do not come in to sign on a regular basis are moved down to the bottom of the list. Everyone has to respect rules of behaviour such as refraining from drinking and making sure they are clean, shaved, and properly dressed. To maintain this discipline of the "good worker" presentation, there are a series of services such as free cleaning facilities and second-hand clothing to which the migrants can have access. However, in practice the work calls are not always directed to people following the signature list. Those who are perceived by the managers to have behaved "correctly" and "reliably" in previous work assignments (for instance being punctual and working efficiently without using abusive language) tend to be offered the jobs even if they sometimes are not at the top of the list.

Pedro is one of the people in charge of the everyday running of the program. He came from Monterrey, Nuevo León, ten years previously after a broken marriage, leaving behind four children and never being in a position to go back and visit. He has seen very different waves of migrants coming through the DLP in the last ten years. He does not speak good English, nor has he any "papers," but his main role (and wage) is connected to the smooth managing of the place. There have been conflicts between him and a group of migrants who complain that Pedro feels entitled to "run" the place and earn a salary, but that he really is just one of them. The migrants feel that his position is not very different to theirs as he is an illegal migrant himself. What Pedro has been able to do has been to carve out for himself a position of "privilege" through a long-standing and loyal relationship with those who run and fund the project. A few years previously, a conflict between the DLP board of trustees and the people employed by the program took a very harsh turn and Pedro was on the verge of being sacked while his "authority" in running the place was challenged by the migrants attending the program.

The majority of people who currently arrive at the DLP are *gente sin oficios* (people without expertise); some may have particular skills

(musical or teaching, for instance), but the reality of work for this newly arrived population is of labour de-skilling in the United States. Pedro describes the 1997–1999 wave of migration (partly after Hurricane Mitch) as *golondrinas* (swallows), implying that they would be better off going back than trying their fortunes among too many others with no education or specialised skills. In his view, shared by other long-time migrants attending the program, San Francisco and California are becoming “too crowded”: there are not enough possibilities for new Latino migrants. So a condition experienced by this population is the lack of support; they are “loners” in the migrant experience.

The common trait of this population is that nobody has legal migrant status (so-called *mojados*, wetbacks); therefore, they cannot have access to legally contractual or unionised labour. Some of them have no knowledge or confidence in the system that allows them to claim basic California worker rights (such as to be paid at least the minimum wage and be covered for work accidents) and the DLP provides them with important assistance. It has been observed that Mexican labour fills an expanding niche of low-skilled labour in California that is structurally embedded in the United States economy and “institutionalised” in United States/Mexican relations (Cornelius 1998). Unfortunately, the return for increased education and labour skills is lower for current Mexican migrant generations than for previous ones (Myers 1998), which means that the recent migrants have fewer possibilities for socio-economic upward mobility than earlier ones.

However, this population, with its precarious conditions and its borderline with homelessness, does not reflect the majority of the Latino population in San Francisco. Nonetheless, it exemplifies a possibility in the trajectory of part of the Mexican (male) migration to the United States. The experience of these particular migrants is composed of some recurrent steps. Some of them do not have extended family or friends with whom to stay. Moreover, there is a prevalent notion of *arrimados apestan a los tres días* (guests become tiring after the third day), so even if they arrive with family or connections they have to make their own way quickly.

Hence, this is what I call a migration of the “lonely.” Mutual help and reciprocity is an intermittent condition for this migrant population that experiences daily competition over resources for lodging, labour offers, health and recreational services, and low economic returns for their labour. Low wages in a condition of late capitalism are the result of a constant influx of newly arrived migrants who constitute the base of cheap labour for what has been an expanding Californian and San Franciscan economy in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

This is a rather different picture of the Mexican migrant population to which others have referred. Glick has argued that recent Mexican migrants to the United States rely more on living within extended family households than Mexican Americans do and that they tend to share housing with kin of the same generation (1999: 756). However, in this and other similar studies that highlight the social cohesion and mutual trust of this population, little is mentioned about the temporality of migration (whether those migrants will stay in extended horizontal households) and what is the interface of this residential pattern with local changes in the economy and the urban housing market.

San Francisco already has one of the highest rental markets in the country, a limited availability of low income, and squat accommodations and a high number of transnational migrants as well as of settlers from out of the city (Gowan 2002: 505). This combination of forces increases the pressure on available accommodation, especially for those single young immigrant men who cannot rely on existing extended family network support in the San Francisco area. Some of these migrants will eventually find shared accommodation and hopefully a relatively stable income. Others will fall through the existing social security net and will carry on living in temporary shelter, or on the street. The DLP then captures a particular temporality in a largely illegal migrant trajectory that can have multiple endings. The point is to recognize that part of this population does and part will not “make” it (*no la hacen*) and that we need to better understand some of the gendered perspectives that this urban experience imposes on these migrant lives.

The great majority of the people who attend the DLP in search of work have come to the United States without family (in the months I was there only a few women, mainly white and with drug and alcohol problems, popped in to ask about work and support), either because they were unmarried or divorced to start with, or because they have not been able to acquire the social and economic stability to bring their family to the United States.

One morning while I was sitting with a few migrants near a fence at the back of one trailer, one of them noticed that there were “fantasies of familiarity” among those who have some drugs and alcohol and share it only with their little group “to ease their impotence,” but these were “just fantasies, people can fall out on the next day.” Pedro also noticed that among the stream of migrants he had seen over the course of many years, some cluster and hang on together if there is something to share, but may easily fall out. Alcoholism and drug addiction is emerging as a disquieting reality of Latino migrants across different communities in the United States (Camposeco 2000:

173) and the uncertainties of migration and employment have been documented as taking a toll on Mexican migrants' health. Hence this is an increasingly recognised dangerous field for Latino migrants' health in the United States (Portillo et al. 2001). For Pedro, who has been able to rent a flat and make a decent living (even without being able to speak English), these clusters in flux often are an object of scrutiny. He wants people to "behave well" in the program, as his position and authority are at stake. The "falling out" should better be out of sight of the program and off the trailers' grounds altogether.

Strategies of urban survival, experiences of impotency and work competition are not easily translatable into "shared," "collective" identities. For this migrant population, in a complex field of transnational action, there is no clear-cut "collective" identity shared via a "common" interpretative experience. The "collective" identity, if it exists at all, is situated in a shared positionality at the fringe of the labour market and in a subjective suffering. Hence, transnational research should also dwell in "fantasies" and fears that emerge in the migratory process. Fantasies of familiarities and fantasies of betrayal, for instance, point to a "grey" area that not only addresses imagined futures or lost pasts, but gives us insights into the tensions and gaps that exist between the experiences of migration and the narratives that are articulated about them⁸ (Stewart 1996).

"Mi casa [no] es su casa" (*My home is [not] your home*)

In order to embrace the heterogeneity of this migrant population, we need a magnifying glass. Migration is a process of transformation as well as one of empowerment and losses, and I position this magnifying glass at the historically contingent interface between embodied states of migrancy, the representations of migratory processes, and migrant labour positionality. Building on the documented techniques and disciplines of transnational migrant labour (Rouse 1992), I push forward an analytical perspective that begins by embracing multiple tensions between subjects' positions in the labour market, suffering and affects, memory, and the embodiment of experience.

If we accept that transnational, illegal migration is, in many instances, an inextricable, interwoven, personal and social traumatic experience (Davidson 2000), we need to pay attention both to what is remembered and what is unsaid in specific migrant experience. Hence, what are the specificities of this Latino migrant population? Let us start with the point that "subjective" suffering is partly unspeakable. The experience of people crossing the United States/Mexican border is embedded in a "chain of suffering" (Mahler 1995) or

what I call “shifting suffering.” This is experienced by many migrants in this way:

The problem here is that the (Latino) people are not united. If you ask for directions and they hear you speak in Spanish they do not want to reply to you in Spanish. . . they say “*a mi me costó*”. . . (lit. it cost me, it was difficult for me) so somebody else has to suffer the same (Donato, a Mexican immigrant introduced below).

Conflicts highlight the “working” nature of the construction of a collective memory (Irwin-Zarecka 1994) and conflicts that emerge through somebody else having to tread one’s own harsh path have a paradoxical nature. On the one hand, these conflicts disempower people since they demand a condition of the denial of self-validation, but they also serve as a rite of passage, empowering people to become like those “who have made it.”

The infliction of suffering legitimises particular social orders, but being subjected to suffering can also be a stage of incorporation into a new moral community, through a renewed sense of belonging (Das 1995: 181). So what I call shifting suffering is both an empowering and a disempowering process. Others have defined this process as part of intraracial conflicts or “microdifferentiations of subalterns” and have argued that these microdifferentiations have permitted capital restructuring (Gledhill 1998b: 281) while shifting structural causes of suffering onto personal biographies.

Intra-ethnic conflicts are exemplified in multiple everyday incidents in the Latino community: older Latino migrants overcharging rental property to the newly arrived; Latino landlords or property managers unlawfully retaining flat deposits with the assumption that recent (illegal) migrants would not seek legal advice to have their rights defended; billing people for the use of appliances in shared houses; underpaying compatriots in contractual work.⁹ The problem, as some of the workers put it, is often *con la misma raza*¹⁰ (with people of the same race) rather than with the *gabachos* (Anglo whites) who are sometimes seen as better employers and fairer people to deal with (also in relation to Chinese and South Asian employers). Relations of exploitation proliferate in everyday life in such a way that the axes of exploitation are surreptitiously forced by subaltern people onto others “more” subaltern than themselves. Discrimination and exploitation between people of the same colour is nothing new and has been observed among different racially mixed groups (Sheriff 2001: 223–226). However, this reminds us that we need to understand the particularities of a reproduction and internalisation of hegemony from the

ground of subordinate groups (Sheriff 2001: 119) through an ethnography of double (or fractured) consciousnesses of subordinate subjects (Fanon 1986 [1952]: 192–194).

Shifting suffering is then one of the conditions that underlies the production of this subordination. And suffering, in the migrant condition, is also experienced in the physical body. Migrants attending the DLP fall prey to a whole series of illnesses that are connected to their living in the street, sleeping in shelters or in temporary housing schemes, and often being fed by charity schemes. These illnesses range from respiratory diseases to skin rashes, venereal diseases, and liver and digestive problems. The aetiology given by people themselves varies, but some of the most significant ones were described in terms of accidents, forces, fear, and sexual images of hot and cold. This is the case of Ernesto, who looks relatively healthy, is slim, and always wears clean clothes. He has been in the United States for over thirteen years, always meaning to go back to Zacatecas to visit. But he has not yet made it. He used to have “papers,” but he “lost” them, so is not entitled to apply for legal immigrant status. He now lives in an accommodation in a City housing scheme located in the Civic Centre area of downtown San Francisco, for which he pays fortnightly an amount proportional to his earnings. He works maybe a few days in a row and then he is off work for some time. I asked him about particular incidences when he had been sick and recalled a time while he was holding down a job. He chose these words:

Then I felt something in my belly, my ass was really hot, I could hardly walk and I could not go to the toilet, it was like it is with a virgin woman, if somebody masturbates when she is around, he gets the force of the heat, the heat of the woman pulls him. So I sat in a very hot steam bath and the heat pulls everything and I passed something like mud I was really scared.

In this case, humoral and sexual forces form a language, one that articulates fear. First of all, it is a fear around (losing) sexual potency and it is also an embodied fear that runs through the body and needs to get out of it. A sexual language is weaved into a bodily experience and shared as a narrative of disease. Then, while Ernesto patiently waits in line at the DLP free weekly clinic, he and others relate their illnesses, such as rashes and allergies, to both unsafe work (with no protective equipment) and present living conditions: the image of a stronger, lighter, and more able body is mainly associated with the one inhabited and “left” in the homeland—often Mexico.

Hence the body that is carried around in this condition of migration is often “heavy” and tired, lacking in proper sleep and privacy (in particular those living in shelters or on the streets). For those migrants constantly, and often unsuccessfully, looking for jobs, it is a body that hangs around or moves in circular patterns across the city. These patterns usually comprise night-time at the shelter or shared rented accommodation, a morning spent standing around on the Cesar Chavez Avenue or at the DLP, sometimes work, but, if not, often a queue for a Saint Anthony¹¹ free lunch. Then more wandering takes place and back to the shelter again in the early evening. The heaviness and the circularity in space of the migrant resonates with the condition of the homeless person’s body (Kawash 1998).

Migrants’ “circular mobility” often requires detachment from belongings and places: sleeping in shelters demands that people restrain themselves from a personal appropriation or indeed attachment to space. Some migrants complain that they, as other homeless people do when they are housed in shelters, have to roll up their bed, as the place may become a community centre during the day. While migrants receive a place in a shelter (for a maximum of three to six months), the few belongings that embed memory and ties to places and human relations have to be stored away on a daily basis. Since shelters are regimented spaces and mainly the domain of the working staff, homeless people have to find their “sea of tranquillity” in nearby places (Desjarlais 1997: 55, 79). At the same time, attempts at recreating a “home” space take place in different forms.

After a few weeks hanging around with Adrián, he pointed out and then showed me around “his house,” which was the wooden extension underneath the two trailers where the DLP is located. That has been converted into *casas* (homes) by some migrants who do not like to live in shelters or have not been able to pay for a shared flat.¹² This extension underneath and all around the trailer cannot be seen from the outside. I did not realise it was there for a while, as it can only be reached by kneeling down to get through the space between the pavement and the trailer’s extension. It is divided up into the ‘*casa de*’—the house of—after the three people and a couple who inhabit it. One *casa* (of a young migrant and his white girlfriend) has a small TV, and near the sleeping bag a partition draws a line between dirty and clean clothes and the place for food, while the *casa* of Adrián has “his small library” of English and religious books. Adrián explains that, even if those *casas* are open, there is a strict demarcation of space. While sharing the same deck, there is a sense of privacy and one should not go close to the belongings of the *casa* of the others. Nonetheless, if some can rest at night in the same *casa* underneath a trailer, the

experience of these migrants is of movement and unstable settlement in the urban space of San Francisco.

San Francisco is not an "open" urban space for migrants. While certain areas of American inner cities can be considered to be high risk for violence and racial conflicts, the opposite also applies. For daily labour Latino migrants, some upper- and middle-class neighbourhoods of the city are completely off-limits after the early afternoon. Their being there can be "justified" by working in the construction industry or in house gardening. If they still hang around these streets after the end of the working day they look suspicious and it is highly likely they will be stopped by the police and questioned. Hence, in the words of many, there is a "fear" (*miedo*) of going to those areas and reversed segregation takes place. For Latino migrants this is not only a question of avoiding potentially conflictive areas (such as is the heavily Black-populated Potrero Neighbourhood, close to the Mission District) but also of "staying out" of wealthier neighbourhoods. Hence, there is always a potential for something to happen; alertness on the street is not a choice but a vital condition. However, if one root of migrant suffering is located in a body-in-space, others are in an impossibility of belonging and in language.

The body-suffering of the migrants attending the DLP may be visible and is, to a certain extent, unspeakable as "physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it" (Scarry 1985: 2, 3). The suffering, on the one hand, can be interpreted as a stage in the process of "making" it, a stage that may eventually differentiate those "who have made it" and turn them into participants of a new moral community. However, their suffering can also be read as a production of different levels of anxiety within an economy of late capitalism.¹³

Juán is a young (seventeen-year-old) Mayan immigrant from the Quintana Roo region who arrived in the United States for the first time in March 1999. He is married and with what he earns in the United States he provides for his newborn child (whom he has not yet seen), his young wife, and his parents who are all living together back in a Mayan village in Tuxla Gutiérrez county. His history of labour employment began with working (10–12-hour shifts seven days a week) in a Chinese restaurant for a monthly pay of \$700. After a few months, he realised that this was not enough even to cover the rent of a room and decided to leave. Since then, for over a month, he has been sleeping rough (basically on the street, not being able to assure a place for himself in sheltered accommodation), trying to find work in the construction industry. Recently, while sleeping rough he was attacked and nearly killed in a knife attack by a black gang. His narrative

about his present life experience in San Francisco stresses the fact that he is alone here and has no friends.

Juán is one of the younger and most recent migrants to have landed in the DLP. He interacts with a group of older male Mexican migrants, mainly of non-Indian origin. Juán has chosen not to dwell on a verbal narrative of this attack. I can see that this is for at least two reasons. I am the only female in the trailer and I am not the doctor (who is also female) to whom the narrative of the distressful encounter and its medicalisation could “be easier” to tell. There is a gendered power relation taking place: a narrative of vulnerability can ultimately increase his sense of being powerless and “de-masculinised.” Secondly, Juán speaks from his Mayan migrant position, surrounded by many who do not identify with any particular indigenous roots and ask him to “speak,” from time to time, in his native tongue, just “to hear the sound of it.” Some of the Mexican fellows have picked up on him speaking “his” Mayan language. They comment that it is utterly incomprehensible to them and laugh at the way it sounds. Then Juán turns silent, he “glosses over” more details about his life—his Mayaness cannot be “performed” in this public space without resulting in mockery.

In the trailers, Indian/mestizo discursive relations reflect a postrevolutionary promise of indigenous integration into the Mexican nation-state, but a reality that has confined, until recently, the indigenous population to a subordinated citizenship status. Mayan diaspora in the United States encompasses different countries (Mexico and Guatemala) with different histories in dealing with “the Mayan question,” which requires even greater attentiveness for the specificities and communalities of this migrant population (Loucky and Moors 2000: 6). But the mockery at Juán’s language recalls the racial and divisive connotations of Latino migration.¹⁴

Moreover, Juán might not even be his real name (as I discovered after several months was the case with Adrián). Name changing and “multiple” naming is not uncommon amongst this migrant population. It has been observed that naming is one of the structuring principles of the self and self-identity (Cohen 1994: 71) and that naming also is a key practice in the production and reproduction of racial and ethnic difference. Withholding one’s own “real” name could be read either as a defense of a space of intimacy in a migrant condition that does not allow for this intimacy or clearly as a strategy against immigration law enforcement from the moment one crosses the border. The cases of name changes I encountered (I was aware of more than a few cases) were part of the narrative of people who had settled in San Francisco as well as of those who had a pattern of mobility between different United States cities. One could have a name and an “identity” in San

Francisco, but a different one when traveling to Seattle or Oregon looking for work opportunities. Naming addresses issues of *self-validation* and the categories of validation are an important expression of belonging in a migrant context.

However, the transformation of migrant subjectivities relates not only to different, but, within a period of late capitalism, to similar experiences in homeland and host country, and it emerges out of discursive ruptures (Ong 1995). That is to say that self-validation connects to experiences of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and conflictive subject attributions that may be *similar* in home and host countries. In other words, experiences across the border may work on similar politics of identity attribution in the way in which they both mark experiences of being included or excluded. The more general point I am suggesting here is that transnational studies have often been interested in the “losses” and “gains” of the transnational labour experience, as if persons were self-bounded agents in antinomy to the two different experienced societies. But transnational personhood is also produced through resonance and homologies across the border, as a site of a complex sociality, rather than between societies. But let me illustrate this point.

Masculinity and social services

Andrés, who calls himself Adrián, is originally from a small ranch in the Nayarit Region. He came to San Francisco a year and a half previously and has been living in his *casa* on and off for seven months, underneath the trailer. He came because he is “freer here”.¹⁵ Among other reasons, he “had to leave” Mexico because he experienced police persecution whilst leading a janitor workers’ syndicate in a hotel in Puerto Vallarta. He describes himself as a *paladín de justicia* (paladin of justice) as he could neither withdraw nor compromise his position before the municipal Mexican authorities. *El sentirse honesto* (feeling honest) and “having a strong faith” is a way to get ahead that morally counterbalances his perception of denied humanity: “people here treat us [the migrants] like animals.”

This denial of human nature goes together with an experience of attack on migrants’ masculine power. This attack comes from the same social services that provide part of the migrants’ livelihood. The food in the shelters and in the charities is described by him (and others) as containing “something chemical” that disempowers male sexuality (and especially male erection). The connection between “poisoned” food and male sexuality is a reading that is certainly not new or exclusive to this urban migrant population, but here it is articulated in a language of contestation between body experience, institutional

representation, and social exclusion. But the urban space and the host country are also represented by coexisting different images:

Here people are freer, everywhere in Mexico they judge you for how you are dressed, if you are dirty because you have worked, they treat you as dirty. . . here you can defend oneself, the law is more flexible; there are people, lawyers, who are ready to support you, you are not having to sort out your visa alone, there is a lot of injustice, but there are people who are very idealistic here, who fight for justice.

Adrián's case indicates some of the co-existing imagery around the urban dynamics of belonging that were experienced by DLP migrants. The precariousness of migrants' position is reflected in intermittent experiences of interconnectedness and belonging: at times there is a resonance of similarity with an "American Other" because this Other is positioned like the "Mexican Self." Admiration of the host country in this condition of precariousness is conditional upon the encounter with "idealistic" people. It is conditional upon the recognition of diversity and conflicts in the "other" of the host country—conflicts that are already present in the experience of the homeland.¹⁶ Conflicts between different people and interest groups and sociopolitical and economic conditions of denial of one's own self-validation become a reading that can be shared across the transnational experience. To reiterate this point, the sociality that composes this specific transnational personhood emerges out of the juxtaposition of similar experiences and the reiteration of similar conflicts across the border.

Personal memory is constructed in a search for self-validation and belonging that seeks communality in axes of difference. Personal memory for this migrant population is built on the experience of shifting suffering onto the newly arrived and a condition of deferral, a never-ending arrival to the promised land (in the sense of "having made it"). So the migrants are in flux, at the same time as they are stuck. This space of belonging is a paradoxical space. As Donato puts it:

For the people here the problem is that a big dream of life gets put off (*se le apaga un gran sueño de la vida*) so here people drink to forget, and to forgive themselves. One doesn't know which way things are going to turn out (*como se meten las cosas*) and there is no entry and no exit, not knowing how to get ahead (*ni sabe como le haga*).

Being stuck is part of an often-shared experience of personal memory for this Latino migrant population, which "has not made it yet," but that hopefully will, yet in some cases will not.

Marta, a Dominican Republic doctor who has been working with low-income Latino migrants and the homeless population for many years and who is also involved in a leadership program at a Vipassana Buddhist meditation centre, expresses similar concerns:

migrants have beliefs that strangle the person, such as self-blame, fatalism and low self-esteem. Migrants arrive and they hit against a wall here, their dreams are not realized, they experience a loss of dreams, but they have to keep up this image with the people back at home. They get stuck in between those dreams, they are trapped in them.

Being stuck is an experience that relates pain and memory to transnational migration in a condition of late capitalism. The people who succeed to partially overcome this state of “stuckness” often do so by a strategy of “shifting suffering” I mentioned above or by forgetting. From Morelia, Michoacán, Donato is a university drop-out whose personal history developed around a political and civil society militancy. For him, what is forgotten is a form of gendered participation in Mexican civil society and a certain critical, and possibly oppositional, relation to the state:

The people who decide to stay here are forgetting what they were fighting for, they work washing dishes all the time, in total compliance (*no saliéndose de la raya*, without trespassing the line), but this is not typical of everybody. But also here there is more male decadence. Independence affects women and men in different ways, the crossing of the US border, all the difficulties make them more mature. But once here man (*el hombre*) turns to *el conformismo* (conformity). He knows where to sleep, where to eat, and this turns into dependency. Men *se estancan* (stagnate) with conformity, they become lazy.

Donato's words suggest a way in which migrant memory is gendered and how it is shaped by a particular experience of dependence on welfare municipal services that, paradoxically, do not reach enough of the street and migrant population. In fact, the re-election of Willie Brown as mayor of the gentrifying city of San Francisco in November 1999 was fought around issues of improving action for homeless people—homelessness being perceived by San Franciscans as the key city problem. In the campaign period, the Latino migrants' condition and the DLP itself were also picked up as important urban issues by the city press (*San Francisco Examiner* 1999)

Images of pride in male labour roles in the community of origin have been pointed out as important axes of identity for the Latino migrant population in the United States (Bourgeois 1995). Mexican

images, pride of being a good labourer and not being seen as *peon*, and a memory of dignity of labour are counterpointed to a new experience of “loss” of male independence and power due to *el conformismo*. *Being stuck* then is the expression of a contradictory condition. In a state of migration that is close to homelessness, the dependence on a subsidised livelihood undermines a specific construction of masculinity and personhood. Some migrants may well conform to this condition, but others express their pain and uneasiness in inhabiting this undermining space. This intersubjective space is part of an economy of exchange, where what is exchanged and withheld between labourers and employers through labour and its returns is a sense of pride and self-esteem. Labour exchange is about a moral exchange and a recognition or a severing of connections in sociality.

Social workers such as Felipe see *el conformarse* of some migrants as a problem. These are the migrants who have been in the program for many years, described by social workers as “problem cases” because they cannot hold down long-term contracts or hold on to rented accommodation. Their problem is that of becoming “passive,” of “giving in to vices,” “of not being able to get themselves together and to fight,” while at the same time giving much hassle (*mucha lata*). In the language of social workers at DLP, these migrants become problematised as “passive” individuals or “active” in a “wrong” way. A similar point has been observed in the analysis of verbal and bodily interaction between homeless people and social workers within a Boston shelter (Desjarlais 1996: 891, 895). Social outreach programs like the DLP, while covering an important niche in the defence of worker and migrant rights, also demand a type of “active” migrant worker, one who converts suffering into a masculine “get oneself together.” However, this active agency is encouraged all the while migrants are expected to accept without fuss, if necessary, being dropped down the name roster.

In the case of the city of New York, it has been argued that access to social services and welfare is more restricted and more discriminatory for male than female homeless people (Passaro 1996). The idea of the nuclear family and the identification of women with childbearing puts them in a preferential position when competing with their male counterparts for social service resources. Hence, Passaro argues, homeless men should be entitled to less gender discrimination and more access to services. However, the San Francisco case suggests a need to add particular aspects of transnational migration to the picture of homelessness in American inner cities. This entails the necessity of understanding the relation between social services and the construction of gender subjectivity by counterposing different homeland and host

country discourses of the relations between masculinity, labour, and social welfare.

Mexican male migration often tends to undergo a process of feminisation while in the United States, because men have to take care of daily activities and household chores associated with female activities back in their home country. However, feminisation takes place not only in the sphere of social reproduction, but also in the encounters that men have with social services in San Francisco. Those services and benefits are sought after, but they are also read as “detrimental” to the reproduction of autonomy, independence, and ultimately masculinity. In San Francisco, this subtle demeaning and disempowering relation between social services and beneficiaries has also been observed with heroin-injecting addicts (Bourgois et al. 1997). The point is that a lack of understanding of the heterogeneous, often “irrational” practices that forge the everyday life of heroin addicts (and, for that matter, migrants) increases the coercive power that epidemiological outreach programs (and migrant outreach programs) have over those whom they should benefit.

However, there were long-term migrants who saw themselves complying with the rules of the welfare system as a good strategy for survival and reduced labour exploitation. The idea of *conformarse* was not always approached as critically as it was in the case of Donato. It was read as a strategy to obtain a minimal living that did not require working in long and low-paid shifts, such as in the catering business, but instead required only irregular, but better-paid work in the building industry. That was the case of Ernesto, mentioned above, who has compromised with *el conformarse* and now lives without “asking too much from life, but living day by day.”

Multiple and conflictive experiences of masculinity emerge out of these migrants’ affects and dynamics of belonging. This is not a new point in the field of masculinity studies in Latin America (Viveros Vigoya 2001). However, transnational migration processes deepen the ambiguity of manifestations of masculinity, which has already been pointed out in the Mexican case (Gutmann 1996; Melhuus and Stølen 1996). Memories between homeland and host country are multiple, but there often is a condition of uneasiness and an experience of exclusion that crops up around both experiences. Juan (see above), talking about violent incidents of open abuse and connivance between public authorities and powerful citizens in the Quintana Roo and Chiapas regions, describes the impotence of people like himself with big landowners, their families, and those who control political-economic powers in the region: “they kill someone, people like me and my family, and they are out there laughing in a week.”

Often an experience of discrimination, patron–client relations, and violence is present in the Mexican homeland experience and is not new to the American transnational experience; it has already been part of one’s own history both in urban and rural Mexico. Discrimination for many migrants in the DLP program is reiterated by life across the border. Hence, transnational migration can have a direct and positive effect in the creation of multiple political strategies, labour initiatives, and new citizenship formations, as much literature has shown (i.e., Alvarez 1995; Goldring 2001; Gutierrez 1998; Smith 1998). However, it also reiterates subordinated subject positions: aspirations and desires for enfranchisement can be repeatedly brought back to an “unchanged” reality of fragmentation and powerlessness in this transnational field of action. The embodied states and affects of this transnational migrancy emerge out of the gaps, continuities, and ruptures between a late capitalist fantasy of fast transformation and an erosion of class differences, combined with a desire for belonging and a socio-economic reality experienced as “unchanged.”

The expectation of life across the border, which people “want to see with their own eyes, not hear about it through what other people say” (Ernesto) becomes “a wall” that can at times be penetrated (when good jobs arise) but at other times closes in on people (even if one learns to “conform” to the system). It closes in because, to a certain extent, the past of the homeland is no longer viable. Revealing the invalidation of one’s own present experience in the United States to people back home is, for many, an unsustainable option. The space between homeland and host country is a “stuck place”; it is a gap. That gap becomes not only individual but also a space of social suffering.

Suffering, its language and its cultural representations, cannot be confined to a reading of individual histories. Its phenomenology is part of a broad social context (Kleinman 1997: XXV), a cultural mediation that cannot be explained away either with socio-cultural relativism or with its “exoticisation” and attribution to a distant Other (Farmer 1997: 272, 278). The suffering of these migrants is not distant, but very much in the present, and it is political–spatial–temporal. This suffering exists in opposition to a political and state discourse of the suffering of Californians who have to endure “illegal” migration, which causes exploitation of state resources. It also results from the downward move from a migrants’ warrior-like status in their home country into a present status of “illegal” and “daily labourer” in the United States (Quesada 1999: 172, 174, 175). But this suffering and memory are not just related to the gap between beliefs and “reality,” or a condition of oppositional discourses about illegality and scarcity of resources between entitled and illegal citizens. Suffering is a condition

of nostalgia for a future that cannot be and for a past that still is; hence, for both a future and a past that cannot be inhabited fully.

The past that still is often emerges from a condition of *betrayal*. Much of the transnational migrants attending the DLP focus on how they have been betrayed by relatives and social and familial exclusion; they tell of conditions of precariousness that got out of hand. These conditions are also echoed in the experience of negative “contingency” and spiralling down of events that Rowe poignantly and insightfully described among homeless people in New Haven as “the bad luck that hovers around all of us, then sticks to those at the margins who lack the buffers with which those nearer to the centre are equipped” (Rowe 2000: 20). Many “lonely” migrant stories had incidents of marriage betrayal, failure of out-of-wedlock relationships, and conflicts in kinship relations. The blamed agents for betrayal were often spouses or partners but never children. There also were incidents of people who lived in extended households who had to leave because they fell out with affines and siblings. In other words, a layer of representations of migration experience for those attending the DLP is related to breaks in the continuity of kinship relations. Being *hijo de familia*—being well looked-after by mothers or female partners or siblings—is a condition that has been lost with the migration experience.

Betrayal, however, is not only a condition present among these Latino migrant labourers. It is also shared by other labour brackets of the North American labour market in this phase of late capitalism, where work mobility demands high-level time investment but low social commitment. Betrayal then becomes part of a narrative of work loss—a work loss where there is no place for summing up and bringing ritual closure to a work experience; people have to move on quickly, move away, and therefore have no opportunity to dwell in the closure and to identify with somebody else’s story (Sennet 1998). Then, if different types of betrayal provide a common source of suffering across late capitalist labour conditions, betrayal is one of the narratives of the failure of modernity.

While migrant labour deskilling and invalidation of self-identity shape the nostalgia for the future that cannot be achieved, so betrayal is one of the reasons why the past cannot be inhabited fully either. However, self-validation in a condition of betrayal can also take the form of a narrative of moral superiority. Adrián and others in the trailers see themselves at times as unlucky, but in other moments also as heroes and “real men.” These narratives are about hardship, but with a sense of honour—an honour often connected to heterosexuality.¹⁷ Hence, a focus on being betrayed is also a condition of moral ambiguity, a moral discourse where the powerlessness of migrants can be

counterpointed to a focus on “inner” strength and moral superiority.¹⁸ Once again, dependency on social services and *el conformarse* are read as threats to this moral superiority and to representations of masculine autonomy and dignity, once acquired via labour. Transnationalism for this low-income migrant population represents a space of memory that is in-between and that is not fully inhabited, while partly inhabited by exclusion. However, transnationalism also is a space of creative encounter and positive challenge for higher-income Latinos and different ethnic groups, such as part of the Chinese and Asian communities (Ong 2000).

Conclusion

Firstly, I wish to re- evoke here the metaphor of the “virus urbano” and its connection to a political economy of suffering via the nuances of migrant embodied affects. The “virus urbano” in Felipe’s comments opens the possibility of a reading of (dense) urban social relations impinging on people’s bodies. A specific urban aspect may have a force that attacks the migrant body while the body becomes a barometer of the urban space. A “heaviness” of the body-in-space is an element that constitutes the experience of belonging for the DLP migrant population, at a particular stage in their labour trajectory. The body becomes “heavier” because of the precariousness and circularity of migrant living conditions, while it paradoxically becomes “freer” because of the images that the life across the border is a life of new opportunities. The body also is a gendered body and the particular interface between migrant labour, social services, and homelessness in San Francisco shows an area of ambiguity and heterogeneity in changing masculinity. In a condition of competition over employment, I have highlighted how the precariousness of the daily labour market and “dependence” on social services nurtures an area of weakness, conformity, and feminisation of male subjectivity.

Secondly, nuances in the processes of self-validation and embodied affects are important to understand this particular “lonely” migration and labour’s stage. This migrancy is in flux, not a crystallised and inescapable state, and is shaped by conditions such as “being stuck,” being betrayed, and a nostalgia for a future that cannot be and a past that still remains, in the already “over-crowded” California. Hence, in the study of transnational migrancy we need to pay ethnographic attention not only to space and spatial metaphors, but also to temporal metaphors and to different and intersecting temporalities.

Finally, a condition of suffering and “shifting suffering” becomes a way in which migrants’ history articulates with a globalising labour

economy. Nonetheless, these histories point to a historical, traumatic reality that is still partially incomprehensible to the migrant who experiences it, since it is an experience of suffering in the making, which is not yet fully owned because it is not fully articulated in language and because the social suffering is not yet over (Caruth 1995: 151). In the labour stage inhabited by these transnational migrants, within what was the 2000 boom of San Francisco's economy, belonging emerges out of a disjunction of images and representations and a nostalgia for a future that cannot be and a (homeland) present that still is. This requires us to pay attention to embodied affects that are woven into an economy of transnational migration and to engage with the articulation of this suffering and affects that are not "exoticised" out there, but that for their ordinariness become invisible here.

Notes

Received 7 April 2004; accepted 20 October, 2004.

The fieldwork was supported by a Nuffield Foundation Grant, the University of Cambridge Travel Fund, and Clare Hall College Research Fund. On site I am indebted for institutional and academic support to the Department of Anthropology, History, and Social Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and especially to Professor Christie Kiefer and Professor Philippe Bourgois. I wish to thank them as well as Dr. Margarita Loinaz for comments on a draft of this article and the two anonymous readers. However, needless to say, the responsibility for the ideas expressed here is totally mine.

Address correspondence to Valentina Napolitano Quayson, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Toronto, 100 St. George Street, Toronto, ON, Canada M5S 3G3. E-mail: v.napolitano-quayson@sussex.ac.uk

1. I use the widely accepted term Latino rather than the term "Hispanic," as the latter has been created in a particular historical moment and stigmatically ascribed to people by an administrative language for state regulatory purposes (Oboler 1995).
2. With late capitalism, I refer to a postindustrial processual nature of capital that is characterised by rapid monetary accumulation and flexibility of labour force (Harvey 1989). This condition requires an "intersecting command of money, time and space" (Harvey 1989: 227) that results in an acceleration of production, consumption, and circulation of goods, labour, and information. In a post-Fordist era, the flexibility of labour experienced by the flow of newly arrived transnational migrants to the United States is often translated into nonunionised work and in increased competition over labour offers.
3. It is important to remember that the 1994 devaluation was a watershed in Mexican society's response to NAFTA. Albeit since Salinas de Gortari Mexican governments have embraced a neoliberal ideology of economic convergence with the United States, promoting a policy of defence of private property, a withdrawal of interest from public services, and state-subsidised production, different forms of nationalistic

- sentiments against the agreement have arisen even among the more privileged classes (Morris and Passé-Smith 2001).
4. Experience is a problematic category in anthropology that I cannot explore here. I only wish to point out that a predominant epistemological query in postmodern anthropological production has tended to assume “experience” as constitutive of agency within the power/knowledge constitution of subjects. However, sensorial experience is not a unified category and, together with the sensorial dimensions of knowledge, they are still assumed as *a priori* to a debate on agency and politics of identity. Thus, the problem is to explore both the nature of experience together with that of agency. For a pertinent discussion of this matter, see Desjarlais and O’Neill (1999).
 5. The following are a few of the many organisations that operate in the Mission, in some cases reproducing efforts: Instituto Familiar de la Raza, Centro de Recursos Centro Americanos (CARECEN), La Raza Centro Legal, Arriba Juntos, Mission Neighbourhood Health Centre.
 6. Save San Francisco (www.savesanfrancisco.org) is one grassroots organisation that has tried to put pressure on the municipality to formulate a comprehensive plan to protect affordable housing and long-time tenancy in the Mission. This organisation is supported, among others, by KQED, the multimedia public broadcasting in San Francisco.
 7. Toward the middle and end of my fieldwork, some migrants asked me whether I was a social worker or a therapist counselor, because it seemed I had more time on my hands than the social worker (psychologist) who attended the program once a week. But I often took the position of the anthropologist/therapist who is “good at listening” and takes an interest in people’s stories, who asks about family histories and the past. As I became familiar to people in the trailer, some wanted to capture my attention, while others complained that I was “hijacked” by a few; as a result, a subtle struggle and negotiation over my time and attention constantly took place. I had to continually rebalance my focus between newcomers and people who had been attending the project over a length of time. However, I tried my best to avoid stepping on the toes of the social workers dedicated to the program. Anthropologists come and go, but local personnel tend to stay.
 8. For an inspiring work on this tension in the histories that emerge and constitute Nuevo León as a border and migrant region of Mexico, see Hernández (2002).
 9. For similar findings in a Central and South American migrant community in Long Island, see Mahler (1995).
 10. *Raza* is a multiple signifying term, often associated with second-generation Mexican Americans and Chicanos, who may have a hierarchical relation of power and representativeness toward the newly arrived migrants both of Mexican and Central American origins (Quesada 1999: 172). In this particular context, *la raza* exemplifies an area of ambiguity between kinship, racial affinity, and concealed exploitation in the name of sameness.
 11. Saint Anthony’s Church, a Catholic Church situated close to Cesar Chavez Avenue, is one of the most well-known charities for the homeless/migrant population of San Francisco. It distributes food, clothes, and blankets and also provides support to enter into shelter and drug-rehabilitation programs.
 12. Wide-spread gentrification of San Francisco, especially in well-established Latino areas such as the Mission, is affecting much of the low-income population. A room in a shared flat in 2000 cost anything from \$400–500 a month. Work in the construction industry paid around \$10–12 an hour, while working as a dishwasher in a restaurant paid only around \$4.50 an hour. DLP migrants did not work on a continuous basis, but in a good month they worked around 15–18 days a month. That makes an approximate monthly wage of \$1,300, but migrants in the DLP may have periods without finding work, when they have to live on much less.

13. Taussig (1987) has pointed out that in processes of colonisation the binomial of suffering and violence is a particular articulation of capitalist encounters where victims and victimizers are united in a mirror of mutual anxiety (and infliction of pain). Through this lens we can appreciate an understanding of suffering where those who inflict and those who endure it share imageries and anxieties that are not rooted in “psychological,” individual traits, but are conditions produced by particular relations of power and specific political economies.
14. The literature of Mayan transnational migrants to the United States has brought attention to the fact that both legal and illegal migrants can carve out a space for renewed personal and community identity. In fact, transnational Mayan organizations often benefit from a more powerful relation with home country institutions than they had previous to migration (Popkin 1999: 285). However, the migration I discuss here—symbolised by Juan’s case—is of the “lonely” and Mayan-origin migrants are not part of organised forms of transnational Mayan activism and have to first negotiate their identity with fellow Latino migrants.
15. Many of the migrant people I approached at the DLP had the idea that San Francisco was a good city in terms of flexibility of implementation of anti-immigration laws and therefore that it is a relatively safe place to live as an illegal immigrant compared to rural California or other urban centers (Gowan 2002). However, migrants often point out a despicable face of the liberal nature of San Francisco (and the United States) represented by a sexual *libertinaje* (being libertine) that many associated with the gay and lesbian population.
16. The conflicts I refer to are the patronage nature of political and labour relations in Mexico and the long-lasting and still-present form of *caciquismo* leadership (see, for instance, Gledhill 1998a; Harvey 1994, 1998; Vélez-Ibañez 1983).
17. I picked up a story in the trailer about a Mexican who “lost it.” Unfortunately, I never came to meet the man, but the story was about him first denying to have homosexual relations, but then being seen half drunk kissing a man in a hidden side of the park. Some of the men in the trailer stressed he had lost his integrity and, therefore, he could not really come back to the trailer nor the program. They had instead maintained their moral integrity, even if living on streets or in shelters.
18. This language of moral superiority and ambiguity points again to another instance of “feminization” of narrative. *Marianismo* as a stereotypical and symbolic representation of female superiority in gender relations—but a *de facto* reproduction of gender inequality—has ultimately been a discourse about the reification of being betrayed (see Melhuus and Stølen 1996; Napolitano 2002).

References

- Alvarez, Robert 1995. The Mexican–US border: The making of an anthropology of borderlands. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 447–470.
- Basch, Linda, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc 1994. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach.
- Bourgois, Philippe 1995. *In Search Of Respect: Selling Crack In El Barrio*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourgois, Philippe, Mark Letter, and Jim Quesada 1997. Social misery and the sanction of substance abuse: Confronting HIV risk among homeless heroin addicts in San Francisco. *Social Problems* 44 (2): 155–173.

- Camposeco, Jerónimo 2000. A Maya voice: The refugees in Indiatown, Florida. In *The Maya Diaspora*. James Loucky and Marilyn M. Moors, eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Caruth, Cathy 1995. Introduction. In *Trauma: Explorations In Memory*. Cathy Caruth, ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chambers, Ian 1994. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Chavez, Leo R. 1990. Coresidence and resistance: Strategies for survival among undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans in the US. *Urban Anthropology* 19 (1–2): 31–61.
- Cohen, Anthony 1994. *Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology Of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Cornelius, Wayne 1998. The structural embeddedness of demand for Mexican Immigrant Labour: New evidence from California. In *Crossings: Mexican Immigration In Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, ed. Cambridge, MA: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University.
- Das, Veena 1995. *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective On Contemporary India*. Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.
- Davidson Miriam 2000. *Lives on the Line: Dispatches from the US–Mexico Border*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Desjarlais, Robert 1996. The office of reason: On the politics of language and agency in a shelter for “the homeless mentally ill.” *American Ethnologist* 23 (4): 880–900.
- Desjarlais, Robert 1997. *Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Desjarlais, Robert and O’Neill Tara 1999. Introduction: The pragmatic turn in psychological anthropology. *Ethos* 27 (4): 407–414.
- Fanon, Franz 1986 [1952]. *Black Skin, White Mask*. London: Pluto.
- Farmer, Paul 1997. On suffering and structural violence. In *Social Suffering*. Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gledhill, John 1995. *Neoliberalism, Transnationalisation and Rural Poverty*. Boulder, CO and Oxford, U.K.: Westview.
- Gledhill, John 1998a. Neoliberalism and ungovernability: Caciquismo, militarisation and popular mobilisation in Zedillo’s Mexico. In *Encuentros Antropologicos: Power, Identity And Mobility In Mexican Society*. Valentina Napolitano and Xochitl Leyva Solano, eds. London: ILAS.
- Gledhill, John 1998b. The Mexican contribution to restructuring US capitalism—NAFTA as an instrument of flexible accumulation. *Critique of Anthropology* 18 (3): 279–296.
- Glick, Jennifer E. 1999. Economic support from and to extended kin: A comparison of Mexican Americans and Mexican Immigrants. *International Migration Review* 33 (3): 745–765.
- Godfrey, Brian 1988. *Neighbourhoods In Transition, The Making Of San Francisco’s Ethnic And Non-Conformist Communities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Goldring, Luin 2001. The gender and geography of citizenship in Mexico–US transnational spaces. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 7(4): 501–537.
- Gowan, Teresa 2002. The nexus: Homelessness and incarceration in two American cities. *Ethnography* 3(4): 500–534.
- Guarnizo, Louis E. and Luz Marina Diaz 1999. Transnational migration: A view from Colombia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22(2): 397–421.
- Gutierrez, David 1998. Ethnic Mexicans and the transformation of ‘American’ social space: Reflections on recent history. In *Crossings: Mexican Immigration In*

- Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, ed. Cambridge, MA: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University.
- Gutmann, Matthew 1996. *The Meanings Of Macho: Being A Man In Mexico City*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Harvey, David 1989. *The Condition Of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into The Origins Of Cultural Change*. Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell.
- Harvey, Neil 1994. The difficult transition: Neoliberalism and neocorporatism in Mexico. In *Mexico: Dilemma In Transition*. Neil, Harvey, ed. London: Institute of Latin American Studies and British Academy Press.
- Harvey, Neil 1998. *The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle For Land And Democracy*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hernández, Marie Theresa 2002. *Delirio: The Fantastic, the Demonic and the Réel*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Irwin-Zarecka, Irene 1994. *Frames Of Remembrance: The Dynamics Of Collective Memory*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Kawash, Samila 1998. The homeless body. *Public Culture* 10 (2): 319–340.
- Kearney, Michael 1991. Borders and boundaries of state and self at the end of the empire. *Journal of Historical Sociology* 4 (1): 52–74.
- Kivisto, Peter 2001. Theorizing Transnational Immigration: A Critical Review of Current Efforts. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24 (4): 549–577.
- Kleinman, Arthur 1997. Introduction. In *Social Suffering*. Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- LATSTAT 1996. Report on poverty and social inequality in San Francisco, Focus on Latino families and children. San Francisco State University-Urban Studies Program.
- Lawson, Victoria 2000. Arguments within geographies of movements: The theoretical potential of migrants' stories. *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (2): 173–189.
- Loucky, James and Moors Marilyn 2000. The Maya diaspora: Introduction. In *The Maya Diaspora*. James Loucky, and Marilyn Moors, eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mahler, Sarah 1995. *American Dreaming: Immigrant Life On The Margins*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Massey, Doreen 1990. Social structures, household strategies and cumulative causation of migration. *Population Index* 56 (1): 3–26.
- Melhuus, Marit and Kristin Ann Stølen (eds.) 1996. *Machos, Mistresses And Madonnas: Contesting The Power Of Latin American Gender Imagery*. London: Verso.
- Menjívar, Cecilia 1995. Kinship networks among immigrants: Lessons from a qualitative comparative approach. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 36: 219–233.
- Morris, Stephen and John Passé-Smith 2001. What a difference a crisis makes: NAFTA, Mexico, and the United States. *Latin American Perspectives* 28 (3): 124–149.
- Myers, David 1998. Dimensions of economic adaptation by Mexican-origin men. In *Crossings: Mexican Immigration In Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, ed. Cambridge, MA: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University..
- Napolitano, Valentina 2001. Complementary medicine use by Mexican migrants in the San Francisco Bay Area. *Western Journal of Medicine* 174: 203–206.
- Napolitano, Valentina 2002. *Migration, Mujercitas and Medicine Men: Living In Urban Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Oboler, Suzanne 1995. *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Ong, Aihwa 1995. Making the biopolitical subject: Cambodian immigrants, refugee medicine and cultural citizenship in California. *Social Science & Medicine* 40 (9): 1243–1258.
- Ong, Aihwa 2000. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics Of Transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Passaro, Jean 1996. *The Unequal Homeless: Men In The Street, Women In Their Place*. New York: Routledge.
- Popkin, Eric 1999. Guatemalan Mayan migration to Los Angeles: Constructing Transnational Linkages in the Context of the Settlement Process. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2): 267–289.
- Portillo, Carmen, Antonia Villarruel, Mary Lou de Leon Siantz, Nilda Peragallo, Evelyn Calvillo, and Carmen Eribes 2001. Research agenda for Hispanics in the United States: A nursing perspective. *Nursing Outlook* 49 (6): 263–269.
- Quesada, Jim 1999. From Central American warriors to San Francisco Latino day labourers: Suffering and exhaustion in transnational context. *Transforming Anthropology* 8 (1–2): 162–185.
- Rosaldo, Renato 1997. Cultural citizenship, inequality and multiculturalism. In *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, And Rights*. William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, eds. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Rouse, Roger 1992. Making sense of settlement: Class transformation, cultural struggle and transnationalism among Mexican migrants in the United States; Towards a transnational perspective on migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645: 25–52.
- Rowe, Michael 2000. *Crossing The Border*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- San Francisco Examiner* 1999. 15 August. pp. A-1, A-18.
- Scarry, Elaine 1985. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Lock Margaret 1987. The mindful body: A prolegomenon to future work in medical anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1 (1): 6–41.
- Sennett, Richard 1998. *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Sheriff, Robin 2001. *Dreaming Equality: Colour, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Smith, Robert C. 1998. Transnational localities: Communities, technologies and the politics of membership within the context of Mexico–US migration. In *Encuentros Antropológicos: Power Mobility and Identity in Mexican Society*. Valentina Napolitano and Xochitl Leyva Solano, eds. London: ILAS Series.
- Stewart, Kathleen 1996. *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in the 'Other' America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Taussig, Michael 1987. *Shamanism, Colonialism And The Wild Man*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Viveros Vigoya, Mara 2001. Contemporary Latin American perspective on masculinity. *Man and Masculinity* 3 (3): 237–260.
- Vélez-Ibañez, Carlos 1983. *Rituals Of Marginality: Politics, Process, And Culture Change In Urban Central Mexico, 1969–1974*. Berkeley: University of California Press.