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Chapter 4 Teaching Resources

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Chapter IV: Gender and Work in the Global Economy

A. Introduction

B. Gender and Work in the US (adapted from guest lecture by Dale Melcher, 10/26/09)

C. Gender and US Welfare State

D. Transnational Production and Globalization

E. Racialized, Gendered, and Sexualized Labor in the Global Economy

F. Conclusion

Key Terms:

Discrimination

Glass Ceiling

Glass Escalator

Occupational Segregation

Pink-Collar Jobs

Emotional Labor

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Personal Responsibility/Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWOR)

Family Cap Provision

Healthy Marriages Initiative

Feminization of Poverty

Globalization

Multinational Corporations

Outsourcing

Sweatshops (Maquiladoras)

Global Commodity Chains

Race to the Bottom

World Bank

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Free Trade

North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

Fair Trade

Neoliberalism

Economic Liberalism

Neo-colonialism

Transnational Motherhood

Discussion Questions:

- 1) We often hear that 'free trade' is a positive aspect of capitalism that grows jobs and spurs competition, keeping prices down. However, what are the potentially damaging aspects of free trade, specifically NAFTA and the FTAA? What role do organizations such as the WTO and IMF play in the spread and maintenance of 'free trade'?
- 2) How is the 'race to the bottom' often gendered?
- 3) The 'feminization of poverty' refers to how women are more likely to live in poverty than men. How do the glass ceiling, pink collar labor, and welfare reform (the Personal Responsibility/Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act) contribute to the feminization of poverty in the United States?

- 4) Many students have worked in service industry jobs, either before or during college. If you have worked in the service industry, when was a time you had to engage in emotional labor? Think of one particular example—how did you feel in that situation? What are the lasting effects of performing emotional labor and what are its consequences for service industry workers, in your opinion?
- 5) Give a definition of neoliberalism in your own words. Think of one or two examples of where you've seen neoliberalism in action. What are the racialized, classed, and gendered effects of neoliberal ideology?
- 6) We often think of sweatshops (maquiladoras, in Latin America) as restricted to underdeveloped areas of the globe (Latin America, Asia, etc.). However, a number of US journalists and social scientists have written about modern-day sweatshops in the United States. What does this say about labor standards and equality in the United States, in your opinion? How are current immigration policy, as well as race and gendered inequalities, playing a part in US sweatshop labor?

Activities:

1) *Conceptual Mapping Exercise*

a) Hand out a sheet with the following word bank:

Discrimination

Glass Ceiling

Glass Escalator

Occupational Segregation

Pink-Collar Jobs

Emotional Labor

Feminization of Poverty

Globalization

Multinational Corporations

Outsourcing

Sweatshops (Maquiladoras)

Global Commodity Chains

Race to the Bottom

World Bank

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Free Trade Area of the Americas

Fair Trade

Neoliberalism

b) Break students into small groups. Have each group take a blank sheet of paper and draw a map of how they see these concepts relating to one another. Give each group 10 minutes to draw their conceptual map. Then, have one member from each group draw their map on the board at the front of the class and then explain their map to the class. Have the entire class discuss how the concepts relate to one another, and how their maps differ.

2) *Sweatshop Fashion Show*

- a) You can do an abbreviated version of this exercise for a discussion section:
<http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/en/node/654>
- b) It is perhaps best to tell students to bring a computer or smartphone to this discussion section beforehand (they will need them to do brief research on a clothing company of their choice).
- c) Break students into small groups (7-8 students). Have each group choose two-3 announcers and 3-4 models.
- d) Have the entire group do research on the clothes the 3-4 models happen to be wearing that day—looking up where they were manufactured, what types of labor conditions they were made in, what the gender and race and class of the workers is, etc.
- e) Have each group put on a brief fashion show, with the announcers announcing the results of the research as the model sashays down the length of the room.
- f) Have the class discuss where and how their clothes are produced, what it means to wear these clothes, and what might need to change to make the production of clothing more socially just and ethical.

Video:

- Redmon, David. 2005. *Mardi Gras: Made in China*.

This excellent documentary illustrates global commodity chains in a fantastic way. Redmon actually has Chinese factory workers (all women) who make mardi gras beads and mardi gras participants in New Orleans speak back to each other through video—illustrating the life of mardi gras bead and the global inequalities it contributes to. Highly recommended.

- Grupo X. *Maquilapolis: City of Factories*.

Feminist collective gives cameras to Maquila workers who narrate their lives as Maquila workers in Tijuana. Documents not only the harsh factory conditions of Maquilas, but the environmental degradation and health problems they pose to working-class and working-poor Mexicans.

More on the project here: http://www.maquilapolis.com/project_eng.html

- Bryant, Kate. 2012. *The Pay Gap*.

This is a trailer for Kate Bryant's *The Pay Gap*, about the gendered pay gap across several industries in the United States.

Can be watched here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlnUD5rzPoQ>

Web Sources:

- United Students Against Sweatshops: <http://usas.org/>
- CorpWatch statistics on maquiladoras, from gender composition to wages to environmental effects: <http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=1528>
- Link to the AAUW's report "Graduating to a Pay Gap: The Earnings of Women and Men One Year after College Education": <http://www.aauw.org/GraduatetoaPayGap/index.cfm>
- Center for American Progress' infographics of the effects of the pay gap and the feminization of poverty: <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2012/04/16/11435/infographic-the-gender-pay-gap/>