Rethinking Centers and Margins in Geography:**Bodies, Life Course, and the Performance of Transnational Space**

Abstract:

In this paper we propose a rethinking of the concepts of center and margin in geography. We review extant literatures from structuralist political geography and science-studies and explore alternative theoretical approaches to develop the concept of axes of centrality. Using theories of performativity to understand centers and margins as produced across an array of axes allows for an expansion of the concept. Contemporary experiences of transnational migration offer a useful way of thinking about how bodies produce places differently as global centers and margins. Drawing on material from two studies of transnational communities, one of white, English-speaking South African return migrants, and one of British East African Asians, we take a biographical approach, demonstrating how two individuals with extensive migration histories have performed England, South Africa, Uganda and India as variously central and marginal across the life course. We develop the concept of “axes of centrality” to demonstrate how centers and margins are most usefully conceptualized not as places in themselves, but as located in and between bodies in a variety of ways as they move through and perform space at a variety of scales and over time. We propose an understanding of centrality and marginality that takes into account the embodied conditionalities under which places become imagined and reimagined as central and/or marginal.

Keywords: center and margin, transnationalism, life course, performativity

There are so many opportunities now in Uganda, I would love to come back... It's a nice pace of life, I could relax. I could re-join my circle of friends and colleagues. But my family do not accept this as our roots are here [in England]...it will be like starting all over again, with a new culture, new life. And you know, my children were born here and they would like to make progress in education, and so for now I would rather be in England. Ismail¹

From the neoclassical economic geography of JH von Thünen's "isolated state" (1966), with its urban core and agricultural periphery, to Halford Mackinder's Heartland thesis (1904), to the Chicago School of urban ecology (e.g., Burgess 2008), questions of center and margin permeate and often subtend the enterprise of human geography. For years, the question of where, at a variety of scales, centers and margins are to be found, has remained relatively static. There is a persistent tendency to understand centers and margins as a priori spatial categories fixed, for example, by previous rounds of capital accumulation (Wallerstein 1984; Taylor 1996; Arrighi 2010). Scholarship that challenges these

formulations is not particularly new. For example, post-colonial readings acknowledge the historical contingencies of the flows and abruptions that constitute the very idea of geographical centrality (Chakrabarty 2009). The recent rise of South-South multilateral partnerships, the maturation of the Chinese economy, the intensification of transnational life and the ongoing contestation of neoliberal globalization and western hegemony all bring the weaknesses of traditional theorizations into particularly sharp relief. Alongside attempts to rethink the contemporary geographies of these recent geopolitical and economic shifts (Sidaway 2012; Raghuram et al. 2014), we also need a reconsideration not of *where* centers and margins are in these landscapes of simultaneity and multiplicity, but *how* they come to be constituted as such.

This article aims to disrupt conventional readings of centrality and marginality by proposing a performative ontology of center-margin relations. As powerful as contemporary geopolitical discourses of a multi-polar world are in signaling challenges to traditional geographies, these new definitions of centrality and marginality continue to be based on quantifiable measures of economic accumulation expressed at national and global scales (e.g., UNDP 2013; FUNDS 2013). This is perhaps most clearly seen in narratives concerning the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and MINT (Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey) economies, or any other number of geoeconomic constructs feted by global market analysts. Notwithstanding the accuracies of these claims, these new geographic imaginaries continue to draw on economistic ontologies and hence have continued to model the emergence of new centers through their likeness to

traditional configurations. What we offer, through a performative reading of centrality and marginality, is an emphasis on the deficiencies and gaps that arise from normative renderings. Instead, we propose a more diverse understanding of what “counts” in inscribing meta-geographies of political space and for whom. We thus hope to move the discussion far beyond what Pain (2008, 1164) has called the “territorial dualism implicit in the core-periphery metaphor” by exploring the varied and intersecting spatio-temporal conditionalities under which places become central and/or marginal.

In this paper, we argue that if we delink centers and margins from places and focus on bodies moving, dwelling in, and travelling through place, we can attend to the ways in which political and economic hierarchies of political space are continually reconfigured, reorganized, and reworked through emotional, affective, and material practices. To get at these multiple interdependencies, we turn not only to the question of performativity but also to recent feminist work on transnational migration as a means of understanding the role of the body in the articulation of new geographies of center-margin relations. Contemporary patterns of mobility since the 1970s, the so-called “new age of migration” (Castles and Miller 2009), are characterized by a whole range of movements that do not “take the form of permanent ruptures...but are more likely to be transient and complex, ridden with disruptions, detours, and multiple destinations” (Yeoh et al. 2005, 1). Recent feminist and queer work on migration insists on the significance of varying life course temporalities to these patterns of movement (e.g., Bailey 2009; Lewis 2014). Ismail’s complex and contradictory relationship

with both England and Uganda in the epigram above illustrates the ways in which decisions about where to go, stay and/or return are affected by the simultaneous accumulations of affective, economic, and social resources and relationships across a range of locations and temporalities that span Uganda and the United Kingdom. By reading centrality and marginality through the lens of transnational mobility, we aim to highlight the contingencies and uncertainties of how, for transnational migrants like Ismail, multiple types of accumulations might perform overlapping and dynamic geographical centralities and marginalities.

To illustrate our argument, this article explores changing ideas of centrality and marginality in the lives of two relatively privileged migrants: Jackie, a white, English-speaking South African (WESSA) and Ismail, a British Ugandan Asian (BUA). The lives of WESSAs and BUAs are particularly fruitful for exploring a lived ontology of centrality and marginality. “Africa”, and Britain, broadly rendered as geographic imaginaries, are often understood as a relationally dyadic pair (e.g. Lester 2005). Over time, “Africa” has become inscribed as the margin to the British center through the continuous circulation of knowledge, discourses, materials and goods through multiple modes of colonial and post-colonial encounter (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Uganda specifically was rendered as periphery in its role as an extractive colony where indigenous labor and natural resources were plundered to the benefit of the metropole through trade, land appropriation and taxation; South Africa as a settler colony functioned as a “sub-metropole” (Legassick 1977) for Empire. Yet through contemporary “Africa

Rising” and “BRICS” narratives, these African states are celebrated as new and emergent economic and political centers both within Africa and beyond (e.g., African Development Bank 2013). Drawing on the reflections of both Jackie and Ismail as they move across, into and out-of South Africa, Uganda, India and England over the course of their lives, we flesh out these changing global geopolitical discourses by examining how centrality and marginality are constituted, reworked, and challenged in biographical context. In doing so, we explore the productive, and critical, possibilities for a much more spatially and temporally nuanced understanding of the power relations that constitutes centrality and marginality.

We begin with a brief review of some of the major geographical schools of thought on the notion of center-margin relations and then trace the performative theoretical traditions that inform our reworking of centrality and marginality. We propose that recent work on transnational migration and the mobile body is a useful means through which to understand center-margin relations as performed by the mobility of bodies and argue that post-colonial regimes of WESSA and BUA transnational life exemplify this performative ontology. We offer empirical evidence on the mobility practices that connect WESSAs and East African Asians to the UK in ways that not only draw on normative understandings of center-margin relations but also fundamentally disrupt them. We show how a diversity of marginal and central subjectivities and positionalities are performed in multiple temporalities and spatialities and conclude by calling for a radically diverse and contingent theory of centers and

margins that attends to the particularities of mobile bodies along what we call intersecting “axes” of centrality.

Centers and Margins in Geography

The best-known and perhaps most influential codification of the concept of center and margin is the core-periphery model of political economy, which, as Glassman (2009) writes, is a “model of systematic patterns of uneven development in the geography of human activity” (115). Scholars in this vein include dependency theorists (Frank 1967) and world systems theorists (e.g., Wallerstein 1974), who focused on the interplay between center-margin relations at both national and international scales. Structuralist political and economic geography is imbued with a deep history of understanding centers as both fixed and self-evident, relying upon unequal relations of capitalist exploitation as an explanatory framework (Terlouw 1992). For example, Flint and Taylor (2007, 104) argue that the “core” relies precisely on structural inequalities to maintain its privileged position, and thus is immutable. The margin, in their view, becomes incorporated *into* the orbit of the center but, as Berland (2006, 62) puts it, “remains ‘behind’[...] or ‘outside’ in terms of industrial and political power.” Friedmann’s (1972) description of the progressive integration of marginal regional economies through economic and technological processes in central “growth poles,” and its reiteration in the later categorization of world cities into “hierarchies of integration” (e.g., Cohen 1981; Friedmann, 1986) typifies this approach. Although the spatial extent of the world system has varied over time, as it has come to absorb almost all of the globe into its periphery, its

basic structure, with North West Europe (and later, North America) at its core, has been theorized not just as hardly changing since the sixteenth century but also as intrinsically immutable. As geo-historians acknowledge, of course, there have been a series of “core-making processes” that multiply generated this geography over time, such as the development of sites of information exchange (Smith 1984), the construction of communications and transport pathways (Innis 1995), and the evolution of spaces of modern science (Taylor, Hoyler, and Evans 2008). These, however, are theorized to have taken place in the past, cementing an *a priori* understanding of where and what the core is and how its connection to the margin is constituted.

While structuralist political geography relies on mapping flows of capital in determining centrality and marginality, geographers drawing on science and technology studies demonstrate the importance of flows of a range of other objects, including people and knowledge. Working with a theoretical framework vastly different from world systems theory, scholars in this tradition have approached the question of centers and margins largely through an empirical emphasis on “centers of calculation” (Latour 1987). Centers of calculation are places where “immutable mobiles” (Latour, 1986) and “intellectual capital” (Innis 1995; Berland 2006) are amassed “through a series of episodic circuits involving a repetitive going out into the world and returning to a home base” (Jöns 2011, 159). Indicating the centrality of non-human objects to the constitution of centers of calculation, Jöns notes that these movements involve the marshaling of “heterogeneous resources such as samples, artifacts, collaborators,

knowledge, and ideas” (Jöns 2008, 355). While Jöns argues that academic travel was central to producing Cambridge as a center of calculation, her discussion makes it apparent that the geography of these flows was only an expression of center-margin relations at the time. Jöns’ emphasis on travel and movement is useful here in attending to the flows and motilities of bodies and objects, which produce multiple centers as a result. But the emergence of centers is understood, again, as a *reflection* of general patterns of British imperial dominance, not *constitutive* of center-margin relations. Thus, despite its distinct theoretical origins, this school of thought can reproduce the structurally deterministic conception of global power embraced by world systems theory.

Noel Parker’s (2008) refinement of “traditional” world systems understandings of centers and margins stresses the importance of conceptualizing the two as a *relation*—a mutually constitutive dyadic pair. Though he defines centers as those sites of power with the ability to “extend their organizing capacities over space,” Parker’s goal primarily is to “show how the ‘geometry’ within or around socio-political entities is constructed—and may be being reconstructed—at the margins” (4). The margin is thus defined in this formulation as those sites where the center’s order is challenged. This work of destabilization is not, of course, accomplished by the space of the margin itself, but by what Parker calls “marginal actors” (12). Parker’s conception of actors and identities *within* marginal places is important for its incorporation of individual and institutional agency and thus their capacities for disruption of center-margin orderings. Later in this article we extend these arguments by attending to the transnational and

translocal flows and connections of actors that move *between* places. The contemporary mobility practices of WESSAs and BUAs thus pose an important set of questions not only around how actors “do” center-margin relations, but what the actual ontology of centers and margins is.

Performativity, transnational migration and Axes of Centrality

Feminist, postmodernist, queer, postcolonial and, critical race studies interventions have prioritized the task of re-imagining centrality as well as the revalorization of marginality itself as a site of resistance and self-definition, opportunity, hope, and freedom (e.g., Lorde 1984; hooks 1989; Shields 1991; wa Thiong’o 1993; Rich 2003). This is a diverse body of work that questions the use of centrality and marginality to denote an asymmetrical hierarchical dualism whereby centres are loci of power and privilege and margins are spaces of lack, disadvantage and oppression. Feminist geographical theorizations of performativity can also be useful here in denaturalizing the idea that space is a pre-given container for particular kinds of thought and action. In this section, we sketch out the contours of a performative approach and discuss its potential, alongside that of the transnational migration literature, for disrupting structural political economic theorisations of centrality and marginality.

The concept of performativity as used in queer and feminist theory is a deeply anti-foundationalist ethos that questions the fixity and a priori determinacy of subjectivity. Performativity is perhaps most closely associated with Judith Butler’s seminal monograph *Gender Trouble* (1990) which argues that *reiterative*

textual and citational practices constitute a central matrix of power in processes of gendered subjectification. Butler's work has been most influential through its use of performativity to denaturalize the gendered subject, providing an important explanatory model for the post-modern anti-essentialism. Geographers have usefully extended Butler's notion of performativity from a focus on the subject to space, not only by highlighting the importance of space to the citational practices that produce gendered and sexed subjectivities (Bell et al 1994) but also as a explanation for the very constitution of space itself (Rose-Redwood and Glass 2014). For Gillian Rose (1999), just as gendered subjects emerge from repetitive embodied citational practices, similarly spaces are produced through their own continuous enactment. As she argues space is "a doing" that "does not precede its doing" but is "practiced, a matrix of play, dynamic and iterative" (248). This set of ideas can thus fundamentally disrupt the fixity of geographical categories of analysis by drawing attention to the embodied practices through which they are both constructed and destabilized over time (see for example, Turnbull 2002; Kaiser and Nikiferova 2008; Mountz 2010). As Gibson-Graham (1996) make clear, a performative reading of structuralist political economy models illustrates how they naturalized themselves over time, for instance through the fixing of "the west" as a center through deterministic academic scholarship, as well as through the circulation and reproduction of world systems theory and developmentalist models in geography textbooks and monographs (Barnes 2002; Power and Sidaway 2004).

A strictly Butlerian approach to performativity emphasizes the repetitive, citational practices through which subjectivities are performed and thus makes no room for an agentic subject that preceeds its own performance (Nelson 1999). As Rose-Redwood and Glass (2014) make clear in their recent review, there are alternative readings of performativity that recognize different kinds of practices in and across space, beyond citational speech acts, as performative. In particular, non-representational formulations highlight how the material properties of space are performed through immanent connections and dislocations made by bodies and other objects moving across surfaces at various scales (see Saldanha 2007). This work highlights the importance of mobility, both in an everyday sense of the rhythms and natures of everyday life, but also in and through acts of migration between radically different sites in the global space economy (Pratt 2004) as an essential component of the performativity of space.

As Pratt writes:

Contradictions within and across discourse come to light through the day-to-day practice of living within and moving through them [...] moving through places may involve moving between discursive formations and may be one way that individuals become aware of contradictions between discourses. (p. 20)

This understanding of space as always emergent and in process brings into sharp relief the roles of bodies, mobile and material, in enacting, and not simply experiencing, space. While traditional structuralist readings of centrality and marginality might insist on hierarchical dualities of privilege/lack, here we foreground the ways in which both centrality and marginality can be imbued

with a diverse range of meanings by bodies moving through space and in this way, we prioritize the potential of the mobile body to occupy, produce and (re)imagine space in counter-factual and alternative ways.

Performative interventions that focus on the role of the body have successfully challenged assumptions of the pre-ordained and fixed ontology of places networked into national and global hierarchies. For instance, Knopp and Brown (2003) interrogate normative understandings of centrality in their comparative study of queer life in Seattle and Duluth, USA. They problematize hierarchical, metrocentric assumptions that queer innovations diffuse along the lines of taken-for-granted urban hierarchies—ostensibly from the larger and more cosmopolitan Seattle to the smaller and more provincial Duluth. They draw attention to the mutual constitutivity of different places through flows that are “upward, sideward, and indeed, multidirectional and multiscalar” (417) and thus queer the conventional wisdom that places are ranked in legible, preexisting hierarchies connected by unidirectional flows emanating from the center. Rather, as they argue, “different subjectivities and resistances [...] associated with different places [...] shape each other in a complex multilateral and diffuse process of mutual constitution” (422).

The emergent quality of the mobile body in constituting the relationship between places is also taken up by Doel and Hubbard (2002) in their critique of the world cities literature in which they articulate an alternative theory of global city networks that is performative and “relational materialist.” As they write, “it

is the movement of heterogeneous materials that constitutes the global economy [...], a figure held together by the forces that compose it, rather than by the functional imperatives of the organism as a whole" (357). They stress that world urban centers do not stand in a pre-existing structured relation to each other, but that the "structural" relation of the global urban system is in fact "the ongoing effect of contingent encounters" (357). Adopting the perspective that "the global space economy is not a 'given'" (358), they can then argue that "the commonplace activities of everyday life are not residual products of globalization but are themselves formative of the global" (358). In other words, the practices that take place in cities and the flows of bodies, goods, and ideas that connect them themselves constitute the relational structure of the global economy and enact an unevenness that is not otherwise preordained. Their work challenges the fixity of meta-geographies of center-margin relations by considering how any network of relations of centrality and marginality is an *effect* of these embodied performances that take place in the flows of people between places. It also points to the surprising and unpredictable nature of where one might find centers.

The burgeoning literature on the empirical and epistemological dynamics of international migration in the 21st century has also drawn attention to the mobile body in constituting space. Empirically it has become clear that migration is no longer one-directional (if it ever was) and that the assimilation of "immigrants" into "host countries" is no longer a tenable model. New policy formations in addition to the arrival of new technologies of communication and transportation are leading to increasingly mobile ways of living across borders

(Bailey 2001). Research on what is now called transnationalism shows that social relationships across locales—rather than the locales themselves—shape the production of transnational networks, exchanges and flows not only of people but also of goods, services and ideas (Brickell and Datta 2011). For example, the globalization of national economies depends on unprecedented levels of movement of humans whether within their own countries, into Export Processing Zones or across international borders. This work is indicative of a more general move away from a fixed understanding of hierarchies of international space towards a focus on the movements of people between places. In other words, places, and the way they are networked together, are produced through the body. The transnational flow of migrant body-subjects, and the construction of the spaces they inhabit, performs the materiality and humanity of globalization which, as Yeoh, Huang, and Willis (2000) remind us, is constituted by so much more than glib discourses of borderless economic flows.

This literature has not only freed up thinking about mobility in ways that question the fixity of place, but it has also contributed to denaturalizing notions of home and away, and of beginning and end-points, in favor of an emphasis on circuits of embodied practice (e.g. Fortier et al. 2003; Andrucki 2010). This conceptual toolbox of mobility as circuits reframes mobility as a “constellation” of movement, representation and practice (Cresswell 2010, 26). Understanding mobility as enacted “affectively, materially, and symbolically—in relation to one another” (Ahmed et al. 2003, 2) also has implications for how we understand the production of bodyspaces. The wave of recent work that seeks to attend to the “human” aspects of transnational mobilities in global and world cities (Findlay et

al. 1996; Scott 2004; Beaverstock 2005; Gorman-Murray 2007; Dunn 2010; Conradson and Latham 2005; Yeoh and Willis 2005), or, what Tyner (2009) calls “how migrants experience globalization” (147), makes clear that centrality and/or marginality cannot be reducible to points or places on a map, but is constituted as such by the bodies moving through them. For example, while global cities such as London or Dubai might be “central” in the world economy, they are simultaneously sites of both privilege and marginalization for the migrant workers that live there (McDowell et al 2009; Vora 2013). Examining centrality and marginality through the variegated experiences of mobile subjects requires that we focus not only on the impact of changing capital and technological accumulations on migration flows, but also on the agency of transmigrants in transforming the very concept of centrality and marginality. While we acknowledge that migrants’ classed, raced, and gendered experiences provide an important though potentially problematic counter-reading to more “objective” readings of space (Scott 1991)², we wish to push this further by arguing that experiences of centrality and marginality within the lives of mobile agents are an explicit part of their very production.

As such, we argue it is more useful to think of centers and margins as produced through the intersections of a range of different axes. Following Brah and Phoenix (2004, 76), we use the term axis to signify the multiple lines of subjectivity, which “intersect in historically specific contexts” and produce “complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects.” Pioneering work on intersectionality made clear that multiple dimensions of identity such as race,

gender, and class do not merely accumulate for a given subjectivity but are irreducibly interlocking (Combahee River Collective 1977; Crenshaw 1989). However, an intersectional understanding of bodies and spaces as more than the sum of their parts does not preclude attending to individual socio-cultural variables. Valentine (2007) has contributed to this distinction by attending to the various everyday spaces in which different aspects of identity emerge as more or less salient.

With this in mind, *Figure 1* is a heuristic of potential axes through which we might understand how bodies variously and inconsistently perform centrality and marginality. This list complements characteristics of centrality articulated by political-economists and science studies, adding a series of socio-cultural variables and categories of experience valued by feminist scholars of migration. Thus places become simultaneously central and/or marginal contingent upon an individual's articulations of the purchase of one or more of these variables. This allows us to identify interconnecting webs of historical, political, and economic relationships and practices that constitute centrality and marginality, but also insists on their partiality and temporality. We assert that these axes are universally applicable, but are more salient in the everyday realities of transmigrant lives. We illustrate our arguments using two transmigrant lifecourse biographies, demonstrating how various axes of centrality inhere in different conjunctures of everyday life.

Biographies of Centers and Margins

Research on centrality and marginality generally begins from an assumed hierarchical relationship between the two, where centers are conceived of as nodes of interconnecting planetary circuits of capital and technology whilst margins are defined by their relative absence or lack. As such, research has attempted to measure and map relative concentrations of power and/or wealth. For instance, the world cities literature—driven principally by Loughborough University’s Globalisation and World Cities (GaWC) research cluster—defines centrality and marginality according to cities’ relative accumulations (or lack) of “command and control” functions (following Sassen 1991). The enumerative measures used include the presence of global infrastructures of power (such as the headquarters of multinational corporations, banks, NGOs and media outlets) and flows of people (see for example, Beaverstock et al. 2000; Taylor 2004; Price and Benton-Short 2008; Otiso et al 2011). This work helps to show how centers and margins can become defined at a variety of scales relative to one another and also highlights that centrality and marginality can vary depending on which empirical measurement is used. As such, enumerative approaches can be a useful methodology for making sense of the economic and political processes that underpin geographical constructs of centrality and marginality as well as their maintenance over time.

In comparison to conceiving of centrality and marginality as an objectively measurable economic and political phenomenon, we deploy a biographical approach that interrogates how centrality and marginality is understood, defined, remembered, and ultimately performed over the course of a person’s

life. Our use of two singular illustrative biographies, Jackie and Ismail, provides something of a snapshot, one that is inherently partial and particular to those individuals, but nonetheless useful. Biographical methodologies, which encompass a range of research practices such as story-telling, ethnography, notebooks, diaries, and oral histories, utilize individual case-studies as a means of exploring how past actions and decisions were made within broader historical and structural contexts (Bornat 2008, 346). Biographical methods disrupt the “fiction of the atomized individual” (Miller 2000, 159) by encouraging narrative movement between past, present, and future, a process that allows interviewees to give shape to the social and political structures encountered.

While the use of singular biographies within political geography is relatively uncommon, recent work within feminist geopolitics has begun to use qualitative methods to unpack the connections between political topologies of the body as it intersects with geopolitical places, environments, objects, and discourses (Sharp 2007). For instance, Sidaway’s (2009) stroll along the South-West Coastal Path in England illustrates how bodies are affected by geopolitics materialized in landscapes. This paper forms part of a recent tranche of work that focuses, theoretically and methodologically, on alternative objects of analysis that “constitute the substantive foundations—the bodies, the subjectivities, the practices and discourses—of constantly unfolding geopolitical tensions and conflicts” (Dixon and Marston 2011, 446). Focusing on everyday lifeworlds, intimacies, identities, material practices, and emotions uncovers the ways in which a diverse set of non-elite, non-state political actors understand political

space (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Valentine 2007; Kohl and Farthing 2011; Pratt and Rosner 2012;), often in “awkward, unfinished, disunited, conflicting” ways (Pain and Smith 2008, 7). Our analysis of the two biographies is meant to illustrate how understandings of political space can be constituted with reference to the unfoldings of a person’s life.

These biographies emerge from a pair of studies (one by each of the authors) that explores the migration histories of two relatively privileged and highly mobile groups that link the UK and parts of Africa through migration histories as well as everyday social practices. WESSAs and BUAs are emblematic for several reasons. Both groups lead transnational lives, both through the preponderance of highly mobile individual life courses as well as in terms of the social fields of their respective communities. The presence of both groups in Africa is inseparable from British imperial history on the continent, yet both groups are also at times discursively constructed as being “out of place” in Africa (Mamdani 1973; Bloom 2010). Simultaneously, despite long histories of residence on the African continent, historically for both groups Britain and/or India have often played the role of “home” (Lambert 2000; Herbert 2012). Our research sought to elicit from respondents their perspectives on the different places in which they had resided and travelled through, as well as thoughts about how their relationship to South Africa/Uganda, the UK and, in the case of East African Asians, India, had changed over the course of their lives, and might be expected to in the future. The first, larger study, of WESSAs, consisted of 40 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with self-identified white South African English-

speakers living in the city of Durban, South Africa, an industrial center and port and the country's third-largest city. All interviewees had spent time living in the UK and had returned to South Africa, though not necessarily permanently. The second study, of BUAs living in the English Midlands, East African Asian returnees, and newcomer Non-Resident Indians in East Africa, is ongoing and has so far involved 10 in-depth oral histories of participants' migratory trajectories over the life course. By exploring the shifting and contradictory relationships that two of our interviewees (one WESSA and one BUA), have with Britain and South Africa/Uganda, this article examines how geographical centrality and marginality is constituted and understood in biographical context.

Jackie

Jackie was born in Durban to an upper-middle-class family and was 35 at time of interview. She is a white, English-speaking married mother of two, who has lived in the UK at 3 different points in her life and carries an Irish passport, which allows her unrestricted mobility between South Africa and the European Union. An examination of her mobility across the life course clearly indicates the way in which different spaces have served as central as well as marginal for her at different times, and across multiple axes.

For Jackie, the contestedness of centrality started at a young age. The first time she lived in England was when she was 15 and her father, a prominent critic of apartheid, took a sabbatical at a British university.

I think about the reason why I love England so much and it was in that 6 months it was a break from apartheid, and my parents were quite actively involved, and we had had death threats and all sorts of kinds of stuff, so going to England, my parents just completely relaxed. We lived in this lovely little house, and we rode our bicycles everywhere, and they didn't mind what clubs I went to. And also it was that people felt the same way as we did about South Africa. It was such a relief to have been an oddity and then get to a society where no one would buy South African oranges.

England emerged for Jackie during this time as a place of emotional centrality, a place where she could feel at home as a child in an anti-apartheid family, and this feeling of England as home has persisted throughout her life, contrasting with South Africa as a space in which she experienced marginality as a child in a white liberal family that transgressed apartheid-era norms.

After the end of apartheid and South Africa's re-entry into the Commonwealth, immediately after finishing university in South Africa Jackie returned to England for a year on a working holiday visa, doing odd jobs and saving enough money to travel around Europe. After the expiration of the visa, she returned to South Africa for three years, but then decided to move back to England for a third time, in her mid-twenties.

I wasn't getting anywhere, so I decided to go back to London, get a proper job basically. It must have just been friends who said,

come over, there are loads of jobs you can get. There was just this idea that the streets were paved with gold, and you could go and find work really easily.

Emerging from a period of extended post-adolescence, engagement in labor and capital accumulation were the main axes along which Jackie performed London as an economic center, but the city's centrality in Jackie's geographic imagination was not just emotional and material, but cultural and, in many ways, literally spatial. For Jackie, London is not only a convenient gateway to international travel destinations but site of cultural consumption.

In terms of culture, and being in the middle of the world, you know, you're like, in London, you feel like you have access to...the world. Whereas here you're stuck at the bottom, you know?

In terms of cultural identification we can see that Jackie is clearly oriented closely to goings-on in the UK. She deploys a common geographic imaginary of South Africa as "at the bottom of the world," clearly emphasizing its marginality to global circuits of white Anglophone cultural capital. But England is also central for Jackie through the axis of well-being. As she explains:

There's much less stress in England, in a way, when you're South African, and you have lived through apartheid, and all the stuff my parents went through, and the town that you grew up is very restrictive and constraining. And I think that's what I started to miss about—not so much England itself, but just about being

away from South Africa. Being away from all the stuff, the racial stuff, the poverty, all the things that are right in your face that sometimes you just want to escape from. I get upset about South Africa. I get upset about the poverty divide, I get upset about the racism, I get upset that I live up here and there's crime and I'm scared to walk at night. I've watched people die of HIV. It's like if I live here I have to somehow be involved in those things. I can't just ignore them and live in, you know, white privileged land [in South Africa]. And so for me when I get to England, I just feel like OK, I'm just gonna forget about that, for a bit.

Despite her construction of England as central along a series of cultural and economic as well as emotional axes, Jackie moved back to South Africa after three years, partly because her now-husband's career was stalled, partly to be near her parents, and partly because, rather than following a seemingly predictable housing ladder and career path in the UK, South Africa felt "full of possibilities" and "more exciting." Her move was thus closely correlated both to her entrance into the time of reproductive futurity and the responsibilities of care. She has since had two children and has only returned to the UK for short visits. And despite England's emotional centrality, and its possibilities for professional development and capital accumulation, it is South Africa that has been rendered central along the axis of lifestyle, due to the relatively low cost of living and legacies of apartheid.

Here we've got this place that we own, which is a lot bigger than anywhere we'd ever own [in the UK]. We've got cars, we've got resources in terms of networks of finding work. And my parents have a cottage [...] down the coast. They've got one in the mountains. I mean, if we were living like that in England, we'd be in the upper, upper echelons, you know?

This quotation flips the economic calculus of centers and margins. For Jackie the cost of living relative to earning power is more favorable for her family in South Africa where things like detachable houses and holiday homes are far more affordable for middle-class whites, while England is performed by her now-maternal body as marginal along intersecting class, life course, and race axes. This discourse also draws on the extreme inequality that is the legacy of apartheid and thus illustrates how her whiteness helps to determine how she can experience South Africa as central in this way. Of course she is in the upper echelons of South African society as well, writ large; only when comparing herself to other whites is she not.

Now I realize that having a baby in Durban, you probably couldn't be in a better place. Well, the weather, for one thing--from the time he was born, as soon as he's outside he's calm. We go to the park and we go to the beach. But also I mean from the point of view of, [having] [our nanny]. It would be very difficult to do that in the UK, but from a financial point of view—I mean, it's horrible

in terms of the divide between rich and poor. But it works for her, as well, so...that makes your life a lot easier. It just means that instead of [him] having to be in a crèche from the time he was 6 months, I can be here with him and she's here.

Class, race, and gender axes here intersect to produce Durban as a central place for Jackie as a white mother who, in South Africa, falls into the upper stratum of South Africa's deeply unequal, racially polarized society—despite an existence that in the UK would be merely middle class. It is of course tempting to speculate about Jackie's future senses of centrality, as both she and her children grow older. Perhaps the UK's more comprehensive welfare state will come to exercise greater appeal than the low-cost outsourcing of social reproduction available to WESSAs. With dual Irish and South African citizenship, further rounds of transnational mobility could in theory follow on from shifts in centrality for Jackie and her family. She did not rule out returning to Britain eventually, though for the time being the place is performed primarily as a psychic retreat, a hybrid of center and margin against and through which the everyday material realities of life in Durban can be understood relationally (see Andrucki 2013).

Ismail

Ismail was born in Uganda, to a Dawoodi Bohra family in the 1940s. Ismail's narratives of the UK, Uganda, and India demonstrate complex understandings of these places' relative centrality and marginality to his life that do not neatly map onto conventional political geographical models of what constitutes global

political and economic centers. Rather, Ismail, like Jackie, expresses a relational understanding of Uganda, the UK—as well as India—as differently central and marginal at particular temporal and biographical moments. This was influenced by his own goals, aspirations and accomplishments as well as by narratives of centrality and marginality emerging from his own social and kinship networks.

Unlike most Ugandan Asians, who arrived under conditions of exile from Idi Amin's regime, Ismail's first visit to the UK was as an accountancy student. There is a long history of international student mobility along well-established travel routes between metropolitan centers of knowledge production and the colonized margins, emerging from geopolitical matrices of power that constituted ideas of western educational institutions as highly desirable centers of skill acquisition (Madge, Raghuram, and Noxolo 2009). Nevertheless, for Ismail these ideas of educational centrality were shaped not only by colonial routings of international student mobility, but also by family and community norms that came to position the UK as a location for accumulations of social capital and the reproduction of Ugandan Asian class advantage:

Uganda had a very good university at that time, Makerere, we called it the Oxford of Africa [...] My father wanted to send me to a university in England [...] to have the best education [...] and there was some prestige for the family in attending a British university because of the higher standards you know.

Ismail's narratives clearly demonstrate the range of associations and meanings that a British education can entail, enabling an understanding of centrality as involving relationships and interactions within familial and communal networks. Thus places become imagined as hubs of education in ways that are driven not by previous economic and political flows that constitute them as such (cf. Jöns 2011) but emerging from multiple positionings and subjectivities that include race and class.

While the geopolitical and the familial were entwined to reinforce ideas of the UK as a center of higher education and learning, for Ismail this is not remembered unproblematically or statically. Alongside the positioning of the UK as a center, Ismail also valorizes ancestral knowledges as a basis for cultural communication within Ugandan Asian communal identity dynamics. Consider Ismail's description of his time as a primary school pupil under the British colonial system that allowed Asians to retain their ethnic and religious institutions:

Most of the [primary] education was provided in our mother tongue, Gujarati. It was a public school where I studied, and the majority of teachers were from India. Mainly Gujarat. Once Uganda became independent in 1962, it suddenly turned the tongue to English [...] I didn't enjoy it much because the tongue felt alien to me. It wasn't my language, the language of my

friends, family, and community. So in those days I found it difficult. But I had to accept it.

Despite the English language being from a historically structural perspective “central,” a situation that arose from adopting the language of the former colonizers as a unifying language following the end of external rule, Ismail’s narratives suggest considerably more ambivalence about the status of the English language. This is an ambivalence that is constituted through his sense of identity as Asian where India, specifically Gujarat, acts as a center from which knowledge travels via the mobility of its diaspora. As this quote suggests, India—rather than England—is understood as a center through Ismail’s’ kinship and social relations, which constitute it as a site of emotional and affective possibility rather than through a detached evaluation of economically instrumental opportunity.

While the narratives relating to higher education would suggest that the UK might be articulated as an economic center through the opportunities provided by access to an apparently superior education and training, in interviews Ismail contested this. Despite his plans to move to the UK for further higher education, Ismail eventually arrived as a refugee, along with his family and community, after being expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972. Ismail showed an acute awareness of the stigmatized identity associated with being a Ugandan Asian

refugee, and the accompanying economic restrictions of life in the UK in comparison to Uganda:

When we moved to [X city] from our refugee camp [...] I used to get very upset seeing my father standing at the bus stop waiting to go into town because he used to have a business of his own. [...] He looked for a job but he could only speak broken English. It was tough because we couldn't get jobs and we didn't have money to invest. We had been used to a high standard of living in Uganda: servants, cars, and all that. Then suddenly we had nothing.

Unlike Jackie, when Ismail moved to the UK it was not voluntary, and the UK was not for him a center along any axis but that of personal safety and well-being. From being wealthy and worldly as a privileged Asian in Uganda, he started at the bottom upon moving to the UK. This also reflects the salience of the racialized body as another axis: Jackie immediately benefited from white privilege each time she arrived in the UK; Ismail did not. Here race and poverty acts within this specific spatio-temporal moment of exile to imbue the UK, a supposed economic center, with qualities of loss and disadvantage even as it confers safety.

Since the time Ismail settled in the UK, there has been a profound shift in Ugandan Asian-African relations. Ugandan Asian exiles started returning to Uganda in the 1980s, driven by the liberalization of the East African economies.

For example, one of the conditions of international financial support for the Ugandan government was the return of nationalized properties to original Asian owners (Holmgren 2001). In a recent speech to British Ugandan Asians, President Yoweri Museveni advocated the growing opportunities in technology, commerce, and manufacturing, agribusiness sectors available for Ugandan Asian returnees, particularly for those like Ismail who have become wealthy (Musoke and Baguma 2008). Reflecting on his own recent meeting with President Museveni to discuss possibilities for return, Ismail notes that

Uganda is on the up economically speaking. There is a lot of potential there now the Indians and the Chinese have become involved.

Far from Jackie's description of South Africa as "the bottom of the world," Ismail here deploys common narratives of Africa as "rising" as contemporary geographic centers of accumulation are shifting towards multipolarity and East-South alignments. Uganda is also central for Ismail through the axis of well-being. As he explains with reference to acquaintances who have returned recently:

What they [his acquaintances] are talking about is that you can make a lot of money for working less [sic] hours [in Uganda]. And also you have plenty of time to mingle with the friends [...] watch movies, or have a gathering. Weekend parties, and picnics, clubs [...] that's the quality of life. Here, if you want to go to the gym,

you must set up a time [laughs]. Here, life is very busy, it becomes impossible to slow down a bit. That quality of life.

Like Jackie's privileged positionality as a WESSA in South Africa, Ismail would also be relatively elite in the profoundly unequal Uganda, making a more relaxed work-life balance affordable. For Ismail, the embodied, experiential rhythms and routines associated with centrality and marginality forge the basis for a dialogical reconstitution whereby the margin is chosen precisely for the qualities of centrality that it opposes.

Despite the attractions of Uganda, Ismail explained that he was intent on continuing to live in the UK. Although Ismail thought that Uganda would provide a better economic life, this does not mean that his family shared his sentiments, or would have welcomed his return migration. In particular, any notion of return was dismissed because of the degree to which he felt emplaced in the UK as the current center of his familial and social networks. For instance, describing conversations with friends who had returned, Ismail noted:

[My friends] said, look, why are you wasting your time in England? Come back. I think they were quite prepared to sacrifice their family life. [...] But my family, they would have said, "why's daddy going away from home? We want to live together." [...] [There is] the fear. The fear that you don't know who is going to take over, and whether you will survive the political environment [...] Safety as well, because you never know when the violence will happen

[...] Only 2 weeks ago, our relatives were raided by an armed gang
[sighs].

England emerges here as a place of emotional centrality, a place where Ismail, at his current stage of life, feels at home, surrounded by his close family and able to avoid many of the fears and uncertainties associated with political and economic instability. Reflecting on his life in England some forty years after his first experiences of poverty, oppression and racism as a newly arrived Ugandan Asian exile, the qualities of refuge and safety have come to dominate his recollections:

England has given me a freedom to live, which I don't think you
can get in many other countries [...] You see, that's what I love.
The freedom to do whatever. [...] If I went to some Arabian
countries, I would not even be allowed my own mosque. This is
the greatness of this country.

While England is clearly performed as central emotionally and affectively, Ismail also expressed that these were mediated by the rhythms and uncertainties of migration. Although mobility is part of wider life course decisions, this is not a fixed or planned process of decision-making that unfolds uninterruptedly, but consists of spatially and temporally situated agentic and structural practices that intersect to influence mobility pathways (Giralt and Bailey 2010). This is illustrated by Ismail's joking reflections on his decision not to return to live in Uganda in the 1980s despite President Museveni's exhortations at the time:

If I had known that Museveni was going to survive over twenty
years, I would definitely had gone back [laughs].

In narrating his mobile life travelling from Uganda to the UK both figuratively and imaginatively, Ismail generates a dialogue between the past and present, pointing to what is perhaps the quintessential experience of exile: the sense of restlessness, mobility and unsettlement. For Ismail, the constitution of centrality and marginality should not be thought of as occurring at a discrete point before his mobility decisions were made, but rather as an ongoing process of reflection, dispute, and contestation. This makes for an understanding of centrality and marginality as constituted through the mobile conditions and ensemble of identity positions involved in its production.

Conclusion

By focusing on the life histories of two individuals, we have considered a range of axes through which transmigrants articulate places as variously central and marginal. We have demonstrated that politics, economics, emotions, and life course positionalities intertwine at different temporal junctures to constitute centrality and marginality in highly fluid, and often contradictory ways. Ismail and Jackie's migration careers show overlapping and diverging constructions of the UK and Uganda or South Africa as variously central and marginal. Their stories draw on colonial pasts and post-colonial presents but are contingent on the specificities of the body-spaces, and axes of centrality, in question. Their stories illustrate the ways in which places can be performed as variously central and marginal by different bodies, at different times. And, because of the diversity of means through which centers and margins are performed, they can clearly co-exist within the same space, sometimes even at the same time.

Opening up new ways to think about centrality and/or marginality as a diverse and mobile concept that can be claimed, reworked, appropriated, and challenged by a variety of actors for a variety of purposes moves academic inquiry past narrow economic definitions of these concepts. Considering center and margin as performative spatial categories, rather than mappable, *a priori*, within global circuits of capital, suggests that there is a wide array of actors that can be implicated in their constitution. In an increasingly multi-polar world, it is crucial to recognize the variegated range of knowledges, relationships, and intimacies involved in determining, not simply experiencing, where centers and margins are to be found. While international capital may be moving East, South (and back again), these flows are not necessarily commensurate with people's migration decisions (even when, as in the case of Ismail the benefits of doing so might be explicitly acknowledged) or their performances of centrality and marginality. However, we acknowledge that these are not neutral renderings: our examples were of relatively privileged migrants, but global terrain is uneven and the contributions of agents in determining center and margin are not equal. We have looked at migrants who in many ways had power to define center and margin and the values and characteristics associated with it themselves. Further research needs to address more explicitly what it means to be on the margins, and what the implications are for transmigrants and other mobile and immobile bodies far less privileged than either Jackie or Ismail, and how agents with a wide range of positionalities perform centrality and marginality in a wide variety of sites.

Recognizing the importance of relationships and interactions amongst a diverse array of people also enables a more distributed, unsettled view of the geographies of center and margin. While our respondents articulated center and margin at national (and regional) scales, the narratives of Jackie and Ismail also point to the variegated spaces where center and margin come to be performed, including universities, schools, workplaces, homes, and beyond. Such spaces can be seen as topographies (Katz 2001) through which centrality and marginality emerge, circulate, and are contested. Reframing center and margin away from a singular, normative expression at a fixed international (or national, or regional) scale towards an array of interconnected constitutive spaces and scales draws attention to these topographies. For migration studies in particular this approach allows for a greater emphasis on the salience and resonance of centralities and marginalities in the everyday lives of diverse individuals, especially for those migrants whose spatial practices over the life course do not conform to traditional imaginaries of migration as a linear journey from margin to center. Such an analysis also situates centrality and marginality as emergent within multiple temporalities, including longer-term migratory trajectories made within an array of life course contexts and historical time periods.

For us, the center-margin relation continues to serve as an extraordinarily useful heuristic for understanding the body's understanding of space, and we continue to insist on its very "centrality" to human geography. After all, our respondents clearly imbue different places with a range of qualities associated with

marginality and centrality at different points and times across their migratory careers. Rather than discard the concept altogether, or accede to a dualism in which centrality equals “privilege” and marginality “lack,” we are attempting to excavate the ontological basis on which centrality and marginality come to be constituted, known and experienced. To do this we have used the concept of “axes of centrality” to capture what Gregson and Rose (2000) note is the multiplicity of embodied subjectivities through which space is performed. Moving towards a performative reading of center and margins as a set of interlocking axes enables them to be conceptualized not only in terms of physical flow (of capital, people, goods) but also as more geographically and temporally complex. The concept of axes points to a broader and more inclusive reading of the production of space as it accounts for the multiple ways in which spaces are performed differently by different bodies—a reading that unfolds rather than collapses the multiple becomings possible in any given space. A spatialized understanding of intersectionality highlights the different emotional, affective, and material dimensions of mobile life that not only accumulate and intersect across the different places involved in migration, return, and circulation, but also to their contingencies and provisionalities across time. Because spaces are inhabited by multiple, different bodies our approach allows for an intersectional reading of spaces themselves, characterized by an irreducible simultaneous multiplicity (Massey 2005) that must be understood both as a complex whole and as a composite of the performances of constituent bodies. Geographies of centers and margins thus emerge as dynamic, as varied, and as various as the bodies that perform them.

Notes

1. Both interviewee names are pseudonyms.
2. We wish to acknowledge a reviewer's insightful observation for this point.

Acknowledgements: For their invaluable assistance with this article we wish to thank Richard Ballard, Ben Coles, Bradley Gardener, Allison Hayes-Conroy, Heike

Jöns, João Manuel de Oliveira, Richard Wright, our research participants, and three anonymous reviewers.

References

Ahmed, S., Castañeda, C., Fortier, A. M., & Sheller, M. 2003.

Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of home and migration. London: Berg.

African Development Bank Group. 2013. Annual Development Effectiveness

Review 2013: Toward Sustainable Growth for Africa. Accessed 12th March 2014.

[http://www.afdb.org/topics-and-sectors/topics/quality-assurance-
results/development-effectiveness-reviews/](http://www.afdb.org/topics-and-sectors/topics/quality-assurance-results/development-effectiveness-reviews/)

Andrucki, M. 2010. The visa whiteness machine: transnational motility in post-apartheid South Africa. *Ethnicities* 10(3): 358-370.

--- 2013. 'There's a drumbeat in Africa': Embodying imaginary geographies of transnational whiteness in contemporary South Africa. *Geoforum* 49: 1-9.

Arrighi, G. 2010. *The Long Twentieth Century*. London: Verso.

Bailey, A. J. 2001. Turning transnational: notes on the theorization of international migration. *International Journal of Population Geography* 7(6): 413-428.

--- 2009. Population geography: lifecourse matters. *Progress in Human Geography* 33: 407-418

Barnes, T. 2002. Performing economic geography: two men, two books, and a cast of thousands. *Environment and Planning A* 34, 487-512.

Beaverstock, J. V., Smith, R. G., & Taylor, P. J. 2000. World-City Network: A New Metageography?. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90(1), 123-134.

Beaverstock, J.V. 2005 Transnational elites in the city: British highly-skilled inter-company transferees in New York City's Financial District. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(2): 245-268.

Bell, D., Binnie, J., Cream, J., and Valentine, G. 1994. All hyped up and no place to go. *Gender, Place and Culture* 1(1): 31-47.

Benson, M., & O'Reilly, K. (Eds.). 2009. *Lifestyle migration*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Berland, J. 2006. Space at the margins: Colonial spatiality and critical theory after Innis. *Topia* 1(1): 55-82.

Bloom, K. 2011. *Ways of staying*. London: Granta.

Bornat, J. 2008. Biographical methods. In *The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods*. Ed Alasuutari, Pertti; Bickman, Leonard and Brannen, Julia, 344–356, London: Sage.

Brah, A. and A. Phoenix 2004. Ain't I a Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 5(3): 75–86.

Brickell, K., & Datta, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Translocal Geographies: Spaces Places Connections*. London: Ashgate.

Burgess, E.W. 2008. The growth of the city: An introduction to a research project, in *Urban Ecology*. ed Marzluff, J.M. et al. New York: Springer, 71-78

Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. London: Routledge

Castles, S. and Miller, MJ. 2009. *The Age of Migration*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chakrabarty, D. 2009. *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton: PUP.

Cohen, R. B. 1981. The new international division of labour, multinational corporations and urban hierarchy. In *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, ed Dear, M. and Scott, A. J., 287-315. New York: Methuen.

The Combahee River Collective. 1977. The Combahee River Collective Statement. In B. Smith, ed. *Home girls: A Black feminist anthology*. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press: 272-82.

Conradson, D. and A. Latham. 2005. Friendship, networks and transnationality in a world city: Antipodean transmigrants in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31(2): 287-305.

Crawley, S. L. 2008. The clothes make the trans: Region and geography in experiences of the body. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 12(4): 365-379.

Crenshaw, K. W. 1989. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Legal Forum.

Cresswell, T. 2010. Towards a politics of mobility. *Environment and Planning D* 28(1): 17.

Cwerner, S. 2001. The times of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27(1): 7 – 36

Dickinson, J. 2012. Decolonising the diaspora: neo-colonial performances of Indian history in East Africa. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(4): 609-623.

Dixon D.P. and S.A. Marston 2011. Introduction: feminist engagements with geopolitics, *Gender, Place & Culture* 18(4): 445-453

Doel, M. and P. Hubbard. 2002. Taking world cities literally: marketing the city in a global space of flows, *City* 6(3): 351-368.

Dowler, L., Sharp, J., 2001. A feminist geopolitics? *Space and Polity* 5 (3): 165–176

Dunn, K. 2010. Embodied transnationalism: bodies in transnational spaces, *Population Space & Place* 16, 1-9.

Espin, O. M. 1997. The role of gender and emotion in women's experience of migration. *Innovation* 10(4): 445-455.

Findlay, A. M., Li, F. L. N., Jowett, A. J., & Skeldon, R. 1996. Skilled international migration and the global city: a study of expatriates in Hong Kong. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 21(1): 49-61.

Flint, C., Taylor, P. 2007. *Political Geography: World-economy, nation-state and locality*. London: Pearson.

Fortier, A. M., Ahmed, S., Castañeda, C., & Sheller, M. (2003). *Uprootings/Regroundings*. Oxford: Berg.

Frank, A.G. 1967. *Capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America*. New York: MRP

Friedmann, J. 1972. A generalized theory of polarized development. In *Growth Centers in Regional Economic Development*, ed. Hansen, N., ed. New York, Free Press.

--- 1986. The World City Hypothesis. *Development and Change* 17: 69-83.

FUNDS 2013. Africa Rising? A Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Future United Nations Development Briefing 12
<http://futureun.org/media/archive1/briefings/briefing12final.pdf> Accessed 12th March 2014

Gibson-Graham, J.-K. 1996. *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Giralt, R. M., & Bailey, A. J. 2010. Transnational familyhood and the liquid life paths of South Americans in the UK. *Global Networks*, 10(3): 383-400.

Glassman, J. 2009. Core-periphery model, in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5th Edition eds D. Gregory, R. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. Watts, & S. Whatmore, 115-116. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Gorman-Murray, A. 2007. Rethinking queer migration through the body, *Social & Cultural Geography* 8(1), 105-121.

Gregory, D. 2004. *The Colonial Present*. Malden: Blackwell.

Gregson, N. and G. Rose. 2000. Taking Butler elsewhere: performativities, spatialities and subjectivities, *Environment and Planning D* 18: 433-452.

Herbert, J. 2012. The British Ugandan Asian diaspora: multiple and contested belongings. *Global Networks*, 12: 296-313.

Holmgren, T., L. Kasekende, and M. Uganda. 2001. Uganda. In *Aid and Reform in Africa* ed. Shantayanan Devarajan, David Dollar and Torgny Holmgren, 101–63. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

hooks, b. 1989. *Yearnings: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*. New York: South End Press.

Innis, H. 1995 *Staples, Markets and Cultural Change*, D. Dnche (ed.) Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.

Jeffrey C, 2008. Guest editorial: Waiting. *Environment and Planning D* 26: 954 – 958.

Jöns, H. 2008. Academic travel from Cambridge University and the formation of centers of knowledge, 1885-1954. *Journal of Historical Geography* 34 (2): 338-362.

Jöns, H. 2011. Center of calculation, in *The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. Eds Agnew, J.A. and Livingstone, D.N. pp. 156-68. London: Sage.

Kaiser, R., and E. Nikiforova. 2008. The performativity of scale: the social construction of scale effects in Narva, Estonia. *Environment and planning D*, 26(3), 537.

Kalra, V.S., R. Kaur, and J. Hutnyk 2005. *Diaspora & Hybridity*. London: SAGE Publications.

Katz, C. 2001. On the grounds of globalization: a topography for feminist political engagement. *Signs*, 26(4), 1213-1234.

Knopp, L., and M. Brown. 2003. Queer diffusions. *Environment and Planning D*, 21(4): 409-424.

Kohl, B. and L. C. Farthing. 2011. *From the Mines to the Streets: A Bolivian Activist's Life*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Lambert, J. 2000. South African British? Or Dominion South Africans? The evolution of an identity in the 1910s and 1920s. *South African Historical Journal*, 43(1), 197-222.

Latour, B. 1986. Visualization and cognition. *Knowledge and society*, 6: 1-40.

--- 1987. Centers of calculation, in *Science in Action*. Ed Latour, B. 215-257. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

--- 2011. Drawing Things Together. In *The Map Reader*, eds M. Dodge., R. Kitchin., and C. Perkins. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Legassick, M. 1977. Gold, agriculture and secondary industry in South Africa, 1885-1970: from periphery to sub-metropole as a forced labour system, in R. Palmer and N. Parsons, eds, *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*. London: Heinemann.

Lester, A. 2005. *Imperial networks: Creating identities in nineteenth-century South Africa and Britain*. New York: Routledge.

Lewis, N. 2014. Moving “out,” moving on: gay men’s migrations through the life course, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 104(2), 225-233.

Lorde, A. 1984. Age, race, class and sex: women redefining difference, in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 114-123.

Mackinder, H.J. 1904. The geographical pivot of history. *The Geographical Journal*, 23: 421–37

McDowell, L., Batnitzky, A., & Dyer, S. 2009. Precarious work and economic migration: emerging immigrant divisions of labour in Greater London's service sector. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(1), 3-25.

Madge C, P. Raghuram, and P. Noxolo 2009. Engaged pedagogy and responsibility: A postcolonial analysis of international students. *Geoforum* 40: 34–45.

Mahler, S.J. and P.R. Pessar. 2001. Gendered Geographies of Power: Analyzing Gender Across Transnational Spaces, *Identities* 7(4): 441-459

Mamdani, M. 1973. *From citizen to refugee*. London: Frances Printers.

Massey, D. 2005. *For Space*. London: Sage.

Miller, R.L. 2000. *Researching Life Stories and Family Histories*. London: Sage Publications.

Mountz, A. 2010. *Seeking Asylum*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Musoke C and Baguma R. 2008. Museveni meets expelled Asians in UK. New Vision News. Available at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/17/650810> Accessed July 21st 2013.

Nelson, L. 1999. Bodies (and Spaces) do Matter: The limits of performativity, *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 6:4, 331-353

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. 2013. *Empire, Global Coloniality and African subjectivity*. London: Berghahn Books.

NíLaoire, C. 2007. The “green green grass of home”? Return migration to rural Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 23(3): 332-344.

Ong, A. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Otiso, K. M., Derudder, B., Bassens, D., Devriendt, L., & Witlox, F. (2011). Airline connectivity as a measure of the globalization of African cities. *Applied Geography*, 31(2), 609-620.

Pain, K. 2008. Examining "Core-Periphery" relationships in a Global City-Region: The case of London and South East England. *Regional Studies* 42(8): 1161-1172.

Pain, R., and S. Smith. 2008. *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate,

Parker, N. 2008. *The Geopolitics of Europe's Identity: Centers, Boundaries and Margins*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Power, M. and J. Sidaway 2004. The degeneration of Tropical Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94(3), 585-601.

Pratt, G. 2004. *Working Feminism*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Pratt G, and V. Rosner 2012. *The global and the intimate*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Price, M., and L. Benton-Short, eds. 2008. *Migrants to the Metropolis*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Raghuram, P., P. Noxolo, and C. Madge. 2014. Rising Asia and postcolonial geography. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 35(1), 119-135.

Rich, A. 2003. Notes toward a politics of location, in *Feminist Theory Reader*. eds C.R. McCann & S-K Kim, 447-459 New York: Routledge.

Rose, G. 1999. Performing space. In *Human Geography Today* eds D. Massey, J. Allen, and P. Sarre, 247-259. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rose-Redwood, R.S. and Glass, M.L. 2014. Introduction: Geographies of Performativity. In Glass, M and Rose-Redwood, R.S (Eds.) *Geographies of Performativity*. London, Routledge pp. 1-34

Sachs, L. 1995. Disability and migration: a case study, in *Disability and Culture* eds Ingstad, B., & Whyte, S. R, 210-225. LA: University of California Press

Saldanha, A. 2007. *Psychedelic White*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Sassen, S. 1991. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton University Press.

Schmalzbauer, L. 2008. Family divided: the class formation of Honduran transnational families. *Global Networks*, 8(3): 329-346.

Scott, J. W. 1991. The evidence of experience. *Critical inquiry*, 17(4), 773-797.

Scott, S. 2004. Transnational exchanges amongst skilled British migrants in Paris, *Population, Space and Place* 10: 391-410.

Sharp, J. 2007. Geography and gender: finding feminist political geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* 31: 381–387

Shields, R. 1991. *Places on the Margin*. London: Routledge.

Sidaway, J. D. 2009. Shadows on the path: negotiating geopolitics on an urban section of Britain's South West Coast Path. *Environment and planning D* 27(6): 1091-1116.

--- 2012. Geographies of development: new maps, new visions?. *The Professional Geographer*, 64(1), 49-62.

Smith, W. D. 1984. The function of commercial centers in the modernization of European capitalism: Amsterdam as an information exchange in the seventeenth century. *The Journal of Economic History*, 44(4): 985-1005.

Taylor, P. J. 1996. *The way the modern world works*. Chichester: Wiley.

--- 2001. UrbanHinterworlds: Geographies of corporate service provision under conditions of contemporary globalization. *Geography* 86(1): 51-60

--- 2004. The new geography of global civil society: NGOs in the world city network. *Globalizations*, 1(2), 265-277.

Taylor, P.J., Hoyler, M. and Evans, D.M. 2008. A geohistorical study of “the rise of modern science”: mapping scientific practice through urban networks, 1500-1900. *Minerva* 46 (4): 391-410.

Terlouw, C.P. 1992 *The Regional Geography of the World-System*. Utrecht: Nederlandse Geografische Studies,

Turnbull, D. 2002. Performance and narrative, bodies and movement in the construction of places and objects, spaces and knowledges: the Case of the Maltese Megaliths. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 19(5-6), 125-143

Tyner, J.A. 2009. *The Philippines: Mobilities, Identities, Globalization*. New York: Routledge.

UNDP (2013): The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World. New York: UNDP. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2013> accessed 12th March 2014

Valentine, G. 1996. Renegotiating the ‘heterosexual street’: lesbian productions of space. In *BodySpace*, ed Duncan, N. London: Routledge, 145-155.

Valentine, G. 2002. Queer bodies and the production of space. In D. Richardson and S. Seidman (eds.) *Handbook of lesbian and gay studies*. London: Sage. Pp. 146-160.

--- 2007. Theorizing and researching intersectionality: a challenge for feminist geography. *The Professional Geographer* 59(1), 10-21.

Von Thünen, J. H. 1966. *Isolated state*. London: Pergamon.

Vora, N. 2013. *Impossible Citizens: Dubai's Indian Diaspora*. Duke University Press.

wa Thiong'o, N. 1993. *Moving the center*. London: James Currey.

Wallerstein, I. 1974. *The Modern World-system*. California: UCP

Walton-Roberts, M., & Pratt, G. 2005. Mobile modernities: a South Asian family negotiates immigration, gender and class in Canada. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 12(2): 173-195.

Waters, J. L. 2006. Geographies of cultural capital: education, international migration and family strategies between Hong Kong and Canada. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(2): 179-192.

Watts L, and J. Urry. 2008. Moving methods, travelling times. *Environment and Planning D* 26(5): 860 – 874.

Weston, K. 1995. Get thee to a big city: Sexual imaginary and the great gay migration. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 2(3): 253-277.

Wright, K. 2012. Constructing human wellbeing across spatial boundaries: negotiating meanings in transnational migration. *Global Networks*, 12(4): 467-484.

Yeoh, B.S.A., S. Huang, and K. Willis. 2000. Global cities, transnational flows and gender dimensions, the view from Singapore. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 91(2): 147-158.

Yeoh, B.S.A., H.H. Shen, N. Piper, and B.P. Lorente. 2005. Introduction, in B.P. Lorente, N. Piper, H.H. Shen and B.S.A. Yeoh, Eds, *Asian Migrations: Sojourning, Displacement, Homecoming and Other Travels*, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. 1-6.

Yeoh, B.S.A. and K. Willis. 2005. Singaporeans in China: transnational women elites and the negotiation of gendered identities', *Geoforum* 36(2): 211-222.

Correspondence: Department of Geography and Urban Studies, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122, e-mail: max.andrucki@temple.edu

(Andrucki); Department of Geography, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH,
United Kingdom, e-mail: jd205@le.ac.uk (Dickinson).

Figure Caption

Figure 1.1: Axes of centrality

Figure

Capital Accumulation (e.g. Ong 1999; Walton-Roberts & Pratt 2005)

Knowledge Accumulation (e.g. Jöns 2011)

Family, Lifecourse Positionality and Reproductive Futurity (e.g. Giralt and Bailey 2010)

Cultural Capital (e.g. Waters 2006)

Race and Ethnicity (e.g. Kalra et al. 2005; Andrucki 2013)

Gender and Gender Identity (e.g. Mahler & Pessar 2001; Walton-Roberts & Pratt 2005; Crawley 2008)

Class (e.g. Schmalzbauer 2008)

Ability (e.g. Sachs 1995)

Sexual orientation (e.g. Weston 1995, Knopp & Brown 2003)

Emotions (e.g. Espin 1997)

Constructions of Home (e.g. Ahmed et al. 2003; NíLaoire 2007)

“Lifestyle” & Escape (e.g. Benson & O’Reilly 2009; Saldanha 2007)

Visa Regimes and Citizenship (e.g. Andrucki 2010, Dickinson 2012)

Time (Cwerner 2011, Jeffrey 2008, Watts and Urry 2008)

Well-being (Wright 2012)