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Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas

Review by: Mary Romero

*Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 35, No. 5 (Sep., 2006), pp. 480-482

Published by: [American Sociological Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30045940>

Accessed: 24/10/2013 13:51

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stated purpose was to examine the situated knowledge of women and men who participated in the Free Love movement in order to place the concept of Free Love in its historical context and expose the sex and gender power differentials within the movement and external to it. To the extent that this goal can be achieved by analyzing a modest sample of 28 short articles (13 written by eight women and 15 authored by 11 men), Schroer's book is a helpful contribution to a topic that should interest scholars of gender, marriage, family, love, sex, social control, or women's rights. However, given the brevity of the text and the narrow scope of the data set on which most of the analysis is based, not to mention its hefty price tag, the book is not well-suited for classroom use and probably will not reach the wide audience that it deserves.

This is unfortunate because Schroer's CDA is so rich and sociologically informative. Her research demonstrates that, at least for the contributors of the 28 articles comprising the CDA, the Free Love movement was not primarily about promoting promiscuity (or sexual variety, as the authors might prefer). In fact, the topic of sexual variety rarely appears in the articles, leading Schroer to conclude that the Free Love movement was "not simply another form of patriarchal exploitation of women and sex" (p. 111). Rather, the Free Love writings of both men and women can be read as "a complex form of political resistance against social inequality" (p. 111), particularly gender inequality institutionalized in martial laws and social norms regarding sex. Of course male and female authors spoke against such inequality in different ways and their writings offered somewhat different implications. For example, both men and women criticized the 19th century institution of marriage as a form of slavery for women, in effect arguing for "a complete restructuring of marriage through the removal of state regulations in sexual relationships" (p. 111). But male Free Love discourse generally "avoided messages of social activism" (p. 104), frequently directed criticism towards agentless abstractions without placing blame on specific targets, and was never "constructed as a call to action" (p. 85) for concrete changes. Conversely, although female proponents of Free Love also offered agentless accounts, they were more likely than men to see com-

plete gender equality as central to the Free Love movement and to identify specific barriers to the achievement of this goal, such as male-dominated religious and government hierarchies.

Schroer rightly concludes that women were writing "from the standpoint of feeling oppressed as women" (p. 68). She goes on to consider nuanced differences in the situated knowledge of male and female authors, including a thoughtful and systematic examination of presuppositions, insinuations, connotations, and the subtle but important ways in which men bolstered their textual authority by drawing on their privileged forms of social capital. Schroer reviewed a vast literature in her effort to select a subset of data capable of yielding such theoretically meaningful and substantively important results. Her content analysis is helpful and her CDA of the standpoints of men and women who wrote in support of Free Love is compelling. But despite its many strengths, the book does not fully deliver on its subtitle: "Marriage and Free Love in the Late 1800s." This broad topic clearly transcends the book's inordinate focus on twenty-eight articles from one weekly periodical, which was published over two years and associated with a single utopian community.

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*Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*, by **Rhacel Salazar Parreñas**. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005. 224 pp. \$20.95 paper. ISBN: 0804749450.

**MARY ROMERO**  
*Arizona State University*  
[Mary.Romero@asu.edu](mailto:Mary.Romero@asu.edu)

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In her second book on Filipino migration, Rhacel Salazar Parreñas returns to the labor processes of globalization, but this time she turns her attention to the impact on families and the transgression of gender norms created by the large migration of mothers from the Philippines. Although the study relies upon public perspectives on migrating parents, Parreñas's primary focus centers on transnational families from the experiences of the children left behind by migrant workers in the Philippines. Collecting her data in stages, she began by conducting in-depth and open-

ended interviews with sixty-nine young adults (thirty children with migrant mothers, twenty-six with migrant fathers, and thirteen with two migrant parents) who grew up in transnational migrant households. She also interviewed thirty-one of their guardians. Returning to the field a year later, she conducted follow-up interviews with fifty-six of the original sample along with most of their guardians. The perspectives of younger children were included by administering a survey questionnaire to 228 elementary and high school students from transnational migrant families. The community perspective towards transnational families was investigated by conducting focus-group discussions with members of local organizations and support groups, as well as interviews with guidance counselors, priests, and representatives from various organizations.

The analysis of transnational families begins by examining the political and economic circumstances in which parents decide to migrate and raise their children in transnational households. Parreñas conceptualized Filipino transnational families “in the context of the macro process of *care resource extraction*,” to highlight three issues: the care inequities that the state provides its citizens, caregiving available to families, and the unequal care resources that produce labor migration between nations. The political economic inequality of global restructuring and privatization by the state limits parental choices available to the working class, middle class or struggling landowners in the Philippines. Structural adjustment policies that mandated privatization by the state, inadequate public services, and free trade agreements keep the Philippines dependent on foreign markets while assuring the availability of a low-wage labor force. Consequently, the route to higher wages to afford children’s private education and quality health care is labor migration. Women are the majority of migrant workers from the Philippines and they are predominately obtaining jobs as caregivers—either in the position of domestics or as nurses. The demand for their services in richer countries results from the increasing labor force participation of women in rich countries where dual-wage marriages continue to adhere to a gendered division of household labor. In countries ranging from Saudi Arabia to the United

States, childcare is defined as a private responsibility rather than a public policy issue requiring state support for families.

Although parents in the Philippines are forced to migrate to obtain high paying jobs to provide food, shelter, health care, and education for their children, public perceptions towards transnational families remain negative. Parreñas argues that public perceptions are increasingly hostile towards transnational households because gender norms are violated. Transnational families are characterized by numerous gender transgressions, including: separation of spouses, parents living outside the country for long periods of time, mothers as breadwinners, mothers leaving young children behind, and fathers taking on nurturing roles in the absence of mothers. Fathers who take on a more nurturing and caregiving role with their children are specifically considered to transgress masculinity boundaries. Parents, particularly mothers, who migrate abroad to work similarly transgress female roles in the ideal nuclear family promoted by Filipino law, the media, and local community beliefs and practices.

Migrating working mothers or families consisting of dual-wage couples present institutional and structural contexts that transgress gender norms and boundaries. However, instead of moving towards more egalitarian gender relations and shifting childcare responsibility and nurturing to fathers, Parreñas found that family members defy gender transformations and reenact conventional gender norms. In examining the lives of migrant workers’ children, she ruminates on the conflicting processes of gender in transnational households and the gendered role expectations Filipino children have of their mothers and fathers; fathers are expected to discipline and mothers to nurture. She also found that, in contrast, public perception is less negative towards transnational families maintaining gender boundaries. However, her finding that children construct family narratives along the lines of conventional gender norms is not surprising. Children of migrant fathers are more likely to describe their father’s absence as “providing for the family,” whereas mothers’ employment abroad is framed as desperate strategy to “escape poverty.”

The major obstacle for transnational households is social structures that prevent

or inhibit the sharing of daily reproductive routines of family life that are essential in developing intimacy and familiarity. Mothers employed as domestics are frequently only allowed to return home for a two week visit every two years. Women are more likely to be undocumented and thus may not return home for a decade. Men are employed in occupations which allow longer and more frequent visits home. In the absence of parent-child intimacy and familiarity, attempts to discipline children have negative consequences in establishing strong emotional ties. Fathers who are willing to nurture their children are more successful in closing the gap created by distance and time away from their children. Text messaging, phone calls, and letter writing are used by mothers to nurture their children from afar. Since the feelings of abandonment are more prevalent among the children of migrant mothers, the constant expression of grief, sorrow, and remorse are ways that mothers communicate their love to their children. My only critique is that Parreñas's focus on gender norms leaves sibling and other kinship relationships in the shadows and more could have been done to show the actual everyday routines of the children.

Many of the estimated 7.38 million Filipino migrant workers residing in over 160 countries are parents who have left their children behind. By studying one of the largest groups of migrant laborers in the global economy, Parreñas's research is significant in conceptualizing the overall impact of migration on transnational families, particularly children. Recognizing how legal restrictions within the host countries function to prolong separation between migrant parents and their children, Parreñas identifies additional costs imposed by wealthier countries under globalization.

## WORK, ORGANIZATIONS, AND MARKETS

*Career-Making in Postmodern Academia: Process, Structure, and Consequence*, by **Victor N. Shaw**. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2004. 230 pp. \$33.00 paper. ISBN: 0761830154.

**CAROL L. COLBECK**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*  
[clc15@psu.edu](mailto:clc15@psu.edu)

This "postmodern" view of higher education is beset with internal conflict. Disillusionment and despair about the academic enterprise are juxtaposed with rational prescriptions for "effective and efficient management" of institutions and strategies for individual faculty success in a meritocratic system.

The dire "consequences" of a faculty career include submitting to the ideology and oppressive community of a discipline, washing away all common sense with suspect "scientific versions of reality" (p. 170), suppressing natural human feelings, abandoning family connections, and surviving on a meager salary. Further, Shaw tells us that after being sucked into educational fashions that ultimately overwhelm and undermine all initiative for oneself, one's students, and society, an academic is "obviously likely to commit suicide unless he or she can cling to some extraordinary courage, hope, perseverance, and resilience that still exist inside him or her" (pp. 178–179). By the way, individuals who enjoy movies should not become organic chemists, because they will seldom have time to watch them. Anyone who enjoys friends should avoid the plight of the philosopher who "walks home lonely from a bar" (p. 180). Shaw also offers opinions about the impossibility of maintaining work-family balance in academia. He declares that women scientists have fewer life partners than men because they either had affairs with their married mentors or wished they could. Men scientists generally fare better in romance than women, in part, because some have affairs with their graduate students.