

Zontini, Elisabetta. 2010. *Transnational Families, Migration and Gender. Moroccan and Filipino Women in Bologna and Barcelona*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 262 pp. Hb.: \$90.00 / £53.00. ISBN: 9781845456184.

The book is inspiring in many respects. Firstly, it addresses the pressing issue of the care deficit in European welfare states and the increased reliance on immigrant workers to provide care, which is at the centre of current debates on provision of care in weakened welfare states. Childcare and elder care, especially, are two sectors of high demand for immigrant women's labour. Secondly, women migrants, who are at the centre of the book, are presented as resourceful subjects who manage to develop skills and build connections that allow them to bypass national and social obstacles, thus avoiding the prevailing discourse of victimisation of women in patriarchal structures and nationalistic settings. Moreover, it provides some interesting examples of changing gender roles in times of increasing percentages of women migrants and their active involvement in the family economy, which are certainly worth noting and exploring further. Thirdly, it explores individual experiences of migration and provides interesting narratives of Filipino and Moroccan women in Bologna and Barcelona in a (twofold) comparative perspective, employing a bottom-up approach that supplements the prevailing literature on immigrant flows to Southern Europe from a macro perspective. Finally, it is a good example of well-structured ethnographic research and an interesting subsequent sociological analysis, which is not limited to explaining the local dynamics in the two chosen cities (states), but includes the concept of transnationalism to explain a variety of practices occurring beyond confinements of individual states.

Structure-wise, a theoretical framework on transnational migration, gender and settlement is provided after the introduction, followed by chapters on immigration, work and family in Bologna and Barcelona, and a chapter providing comparative perspectives on female migration and settlement in Southern Europe. The two central chapters that present author's fieldwork in Bologna and Barcelona are structured following three key themes: the reasons behind women's migration and the legal and illegal mechanisms they use to get there, their position in the local labour market and housing situation (different ways of getting access to paid work and attitudes to work are discussed as well), and the characteristics of new immigrant families and women's roles in them, including how their roles in such transnational families influence their behaviour and choices.

In each city, the population of immigrant women from Morocco and the Philippines were chosen as a target group. Most women who were interviewed were employed as care or domestic workers, in most cases as both, but the author indicated significant differences between them that can be attributed to different attitudes towards work, as well as the host countries' attitude towards the two different ethnic (and religious) groups. While Filipinas are considered at the top of the care and domestic sector in terms of pay, rights, and ease of finding employment in both countries, Moroccan women seem to be in a more difficult and vulnerable position. They also rely less on ethnic networking that can significantly ease their lives in a foreign state (especially upon immigration when they are still searching for employment and accommodation) and more on social security provided by the state. It would be interesting to explore further why there are such differences between the two

groups, especially because the author intrigues us with the evidence of the different position of Filipino women in Hong Kong, where they are treated in the same way as Moroccan women in Southern Europe.

The issue of children left behind is also discussed in the section on transnational families, although not as thoroughly as one might expect and hope. Admittedly, the author's focus is elsewhere, but when discussing transnational dynamics and changes in family structures, this phenomenon definitely deserves more attention than attributed in the monograph. However, this should not be considered as a major shortcoming, as the book is well-balanced, well-structured and follows a consistent train of thought from introduction to conclusion, providing clear answers to the research questions posed. What I did consider a drawback is the fact that the book reads like a PhD dissertation rather than a monograph. The personal narratives that are included are in this respect a very welcome addition as they provide significant enrichment to the text.

What stays with you after reading the book is exactly that: the inspiring narratives of interviewed women, explaining their ways of negotiating constraints and opportunities in the society of immigration. Through their narratives, the author shows that two chosen groups of women tend to migrate due to poverty, unemployment and lack of alternatives, yet in contrast they manage to use the channels that globalisation offers them to escape patriarchal power and increase control over their lives. Personal biographies are thus the highlight of the book.

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