

BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

Sonya Michel & Ito Peng (Eds.). *Gender, Migration, and the Work of Care*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 305, hardcover, (9783319550855).

As the second of two edited volumes stemming from an international multidisciplinary research project examining global care work, *Gender, Migration and the Work of Care* is a critical contribution to the literature on transnational care migration. In adopting a multi-scalar approach that addresses the micro, meso, and macro-levels of global care work, the text stands apart in its ability to connect national and global policy regimes with the everyday provisioning of care. As the editors' assert, the collection's regional focus on countries surrounding the Pacific Rim provides "a rich ground for comparative, interdisciplinary, and multi-scalar analyses of transnational care migration processes"—a claim which is realized throughout the text (4). Moreover, its emphasis on empirical research makes the volume both an accessible resource for policy-makers and care advocates, and a highly teachable text for those concerned with the global dimensions of gender and care work.

The volume begins with two strong introductory chapters that ground the work theoretically in two strands of feminist literature: that of comparative welfare states and care, and gender and migration. In drawing on the work of political theorist Nancy Fraser, Fiona Williams constructs a rich conceptual framework of overlapping capitalist crises in which she situates both the crisis of social reproduction and that of migration. This multidimensional political-economic framework holds promise for being able to capture the profound complexity and interconnectedness of our present crisis—one which encompasses "not only economy and finance, but also ecology, society, and politics" (Fraser, 2014: 4). It is this framework which establishes the work of care as a window into global social inequalities—demonstrating care work's ability to illuminate the tensions and contradictions between production and reproduction, households and markets, and macro-political policies and everyday life (LeBaron, 2010). Feminist scholars interested in globalization and capitalist crises will undoubtedly return to this chapter for its clarity and theoretical coherence.

Moving from the micro to the macro-level, the volume begins with empirical studies of care provisioning within private homes. Arguably

the richest section of the book, several of the micro-level chapters offer an analysis of familial piety that has often been absent from global care work literature. Both Crawford and Chun and Hong's chapters reveal the tensions that arise from the shift from this Confucian ethic to the commodification of care. Drawing on extensive ethnographic research from within employers' and caregivers' homes, Gabrielle Oliveira's chapter stands out methodologically—revealing both the emotional toll of 'caring from afar' and how caregivers navigate the complex relationships between their own children living in the United States, those living transnationally, and those they are employed to care for. Sociologists Cynthia Crawford and Jennifer Jihye Chun's chapter on the experiences of Chinese immigrant women caring for low-income elderly Chinese immigrants in Oakland, California is a critical contribution to the literature on migrant care work. Their qualitative analysis of government-funded home care reveals a "complex intermingling of relations of coercive work, welfare, and love obligation" (62). This intermingling, they argue, should compel scholars to extend both the reproductive labour framework and the care-as-nurturance framework to better capture this "complex labor-love hybrid" (62).

Falling somewhat flat in their analyses, the meso-scale chapters focus largely on the influence of public policy on care and migration. Monica Boyd and Brennan, Charlesworth, Adamson, and Cortis's chapters both provide thorough, yet succinct, overviews of care, migration, and employment regimes in Australia and Canada, respectively. While both contributions are contextually useful, they arguably do not go far enough in tying recent policy changes to the broader crisis of neoliberalism and financialized capitalism in both contexts. Similarly, aside from a short statement from Boyd regarding the "push" factors of migration from the Philippines, both chapters arguably miss an important opportunity to situate the policy regimes within the crises outlined by Williams. For instance, one is left to wonder how receiving countries have, in fact, dispossessed and displaced the same migrants they subsequently absorb through privatization, structural adjustment programs, unfair trade agreements, and a failure to adequately address global climate change. While perhaps beyond the scope of both chapters, a nod in this direction would be theoretically insightful.

Ito Peng's chapter "Explaining Exceptionality: Care and Migration Policies in Japan and South Korea" is an illuminating case contrasting the care approaches of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore to those of Japan and South Korea. Peng argues that a convergence of cultural, social and institutional factors has set Japan and South Korea apart from the global trend—promulgating a *regulated institutional approach* to

their use of migrant care. Peng's research points to the critical importance of situating policy patterns within their broader social and cultural contexts. Her text provides an insightful primer for those interested in how migrant care work is managed in post-industrial East Asian countries.

The volume ends at the macro-level, providing readers with a general understanding of global governance and its attempts to both regulate and render visible transnational flows of migrant caregivers and domestic workers. All three of the macro-level contributions pay specific attention to the International Labour Organization and the passing of ILO Convention 189, "Decent Work for Domestic Workers," in particular. These chapters demonstrate the feedback loop that exists between local organizing and global norm-setting, where each informs the claims-making and mobilizing of the other. Overall, these chapters illustrate the degree to which the needs of migrant care workers have been left largely unaddressed by a bifurcated policy regime that treats transnational migration and global care as separate issues. Rianne Mahon and Sonya Michel's critical perspective on the failings of the OECD and ILO to regulate migrant care work points to both organizations' tendency to hold the care needs of wealthier women over those of migrant care workers. Alongside the preceding chapters, this macro-level section thoughtfully addresses the uneven landscape of policy development, pointing to the tensions and contradictions that arise between various scales of governance.

In compiling rich empirical research under a multi-scalar approach, *Gender, Migration, and the Work of Care* offers a thoughtful examination of the globalization of care and the resulting transnational shifts in gender and family relations. This edited volume is a concise and highly coherent addition to the literature—one which deserves to be read by policy-makers, care work advocates, and any student or scholar interested in the complex interplay between gender, globalization, and care work.

University of Alberta

Emma Jackson

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Emma Jackson is an MA candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include feminist geographies, transnational migration, and critical disaster studies. Her MA thesis is investigating migrant caregivers' experiences of the Fort McMurray wildfire.