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# Transnationalism and the Immigrant: Continuity or Paradigm Shift?

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There has been a sea-change in the social sciences as processes of globalization and transnationalism take center stage. In anthropology, new scholarship challenges the once-assumed isomorphism between peoples, places, and polities (Breckenridge and Appadurai 1989; Lavie and Swedenburg 1994; Malkki 1997). The world is now described as one "full of movement and mixture, contact and linkages, and persistent cultural interaction and exchange" (Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 2). This "world in motion" involves an acceleration in the flows of "capital, people, goods, images, and ideas across the world" (2002: 9). Much of the anthropology of this process has explored the articulation of the global with the local.





Are we in a postmodern era? Are we exploring immigration or transnationalism? Scholars often argue for the very novelty of the world as they see it, and hence the theoretical tools necessary to properly analyze it (that they will certainly provide). Many theorists of postmodernity and globalization suggest that there really is a "new world order" involving fundamental changes in even our perception of time and space (Harvey 1989). Works sharing this tenor often call for a shift in focus from the migration to the transnationalism paradigms. Breckenridge and Appadurai, for instance, claim that there has been a fundamental change in the nature of diaspora,

> Previous diasporas involved large-scale population movements across human landscapes (and political boundaries) otherwise characterized by a sense of stability. Today's diasporas seem somehow normative, creating a pattern of human movement and instability, against which geographical and territorial certainties seem increasingly fragile (Breckenridge and Appadurai 1989: i).

In this new world order, the nation-state has a diminished hold. Not only do scholars want to move beyond the "national order of things" (Malkki 1997: 55), a certain way of perceiving the world that construed uprootedness as abnormal, but some people also claim that the nation-state itself is disintegrating, and propose the dawning of a new transnational consciousness, a "postnational imaginary" (Appadurai 1996: 177). Inda and Rosaldo discuss this "unsettling" of the nation-state, which had been "constructed as a territorially circumscribed and culturally homogenous political space." It achieved this cultural homogeneity "through systematically subjecting the individuals living within its spatial frame to a wide array of nationalizing technologies." Today, they write, "the western nation-states are no longer able to adequately discipline and nationalize all the subjects under their domain." The result is a world in which "the ethnos and the territory no longer neatly coincide." In sum, "the idea of a culturally stable and unitary England no longer has the hold it once had. And the same could be said of France, the U.S" (2002: 20–21).

These claims are problematic. Any study of recent United States or French history would suggest that the "idea of a culturally stable and unitary" nation-state was a difficult and incomplete project indeed. It is as if the dominant image of the nation constructed and disseminated by the elite and its ideologues has been taken at face value by some scholars to represent the state of affairs of the nation-state in former times, which is contrasted with the experiences of people living in today's untidy heterogeneous polities. Gérard Noiriel

for one has reminded us that France today is not that different from France in the 1930s or the 1890s, and in his masterpiece (1996), he aims to dispel the collective amnesia of France's immigration heritage. His detailed study shows that the experiences of the Poles and Italians paralleled those of Maghrebin French today in many ways. Some historians even argue that migration should be seen as a normal element of human societies throughout history (Lucassen and Lucassen 1999: 9). If this is indeed the case, how do we assess today's transnationalism?

The global circulation of people and ideas, as "moving targets" (Breckenridge and Appadurai 1989), also poses thorny problems for all social scientists, especially those whose research traditionally includes lengthy involvement with some subset of humanity. When one's focus of study has potentially global dimensions, how does one carve out a more limited focus? What are the best ways to narrate transnationalism? These problems have led scholars to vastly different types of field projects and, ultimately, quite different finished works, as we find in the four new monographs on transnationalism reviewed here. These books offer important new material on the contemporary transnational experience, with each providing varying degrees of ethnographic detail (two of the authors are sociologists). I contrast these works with a book on migration and anthropology (Brettell 2003), ostensibly a distinct subject, but one that I argue is still highly relevant today.

## Identifying a research focus

People studying transnational processes must determine how to divide their energies. Some trace people to at least one host locale as well as a nation of origin, such as Peggy Levitt's study of Jamaica Plains, Boston, and Miraflores, Dominican Republic (2001), and David Beriss's study of Antilleans in France (2004). The first two works discussed here follow this strategy. *Religion and Nation. Iranian Local and Transnational Networks in Britain* by Kathryn Spellman (2004) explores the religious practices of Iranians living in London. This study is very much rooted in London, although the research she conducted earlier in Iran helps elucidate certain points. Because the political implications of Islam in Europe are on center stage today, she decided to focus on the everyday practices of religious Iranians. We are left with an important work that complicates common-sense notions about religious identity and its relationship to national identities, and which provides an important counterpart to other works on Islam in Europe.



Maria Chee's book on Taiwanese-American transnational families (2005) also privileges one location (southern California), complemented by research conducted in Taiwan. She introduces an unusual transnational family form that involves the migration of women and children to the United States, where they are supported by remittances from Taiwan. As a study of middle- and upper-classes, this study offers an interesting exception, as Chee states, to the "consistent one-sided view of negative effects on the local of globalization" (2005: 115).

The most ambitious in scope of the works discussed here is Richard Antoun's study of transnational Jordanians. Antoun decided to consider Jordanian men from one village, and their experiences in dozens of different countries, a project with an ambitious scope and intriguing findings.

Finally, Parreñas (2005) looks at Filipino transnational families and their consequences on the children left behind in the Philippines. This book follows her excellent *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migrant, and Domestic Work* (2001) on the experiences of Filipino women as they traveled to care jobs in the north. Here, through 18 months of new fieldwork conducted solely in the Philippines, she explores how transnational families are interpreted through normative understandings of gender and the nuclear family. This book is a wonderful example of how wider structural factors as well as the lived experiences of the actors negotiating around them can be presented in a seamless whole. The potential for studying transnational processes through ethnographic research conducted in one locale is made abundantly clear in this book.

The last book discussed is by veteran migration scholar Caroline Brettell. Like Parreñas, Brettell has conducted research in multiple locations, including Portugal, France, and Canada. And, like Parreñas, she has tended to conduct this research successively, highlighting people in one location or another while providing ample background information on the wider political economic processes that have influenced their everyday lives. This book compiles articles based on that research.

## Diasporic religious practices: Islam in Britain

Spellman's book on the religious practices of Iranians in London is a must-read for anyone interested in Iranians abroad, and it makes an especially significant contribution to the literature on Islam in Europe. An estimated million people left Iran at the time of the 1979 revolution for the United States, Canada, Germany, Sweden, and

Britain, among other countries. Although many of these emigrants believed they would eventually return to Iran, it is unclear what percentage has done so to date, and yet few scholars have explored their experiences in the diaspora. The number of these emigrants living in Britain is unclear, but it is certainly higher than the Consulate estimate of 75,000. Half are said to live in London where the author based her study. Spellman explores several types of religious practices, including Shia women's *sofreh* rituals, two London Sufi orders, and Iranians of Muslim background who are now Pentecostal Christians. By considering the experiences of Shia Muslims, she provides another window into Islam in Britain—a topic to date dominated by works on Sunni migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

As many scholars of transnationalism are well aware, processes of identification are fluid and quite responsive to shifting conditions in both "home" and "host" countries. Spellman offers an intriguing glimpse into the stages a diasporic population may go through while awaiting return. In the years following the revolution, many migrants lived with "suitcases packed" (2004: 41), awaiting the political shift that would allow them to return. At the same time, they coped with a real stigma in British society, especially following Khomeini's *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie. When the Islamic Republic did not weaken after Khomeini died in 1989, some started to realize that they might not return after all. Spellman suggests that it is this recognition that led to a shift in the migrants' connection to their culture and language. To deal with life away from Iran, some developed identities involving the reinvention of a pure Persian past and the revitalization of religious and ethnic identities such as Zoroastrian, Kurdish, or Armenian. They also mobilized the mass media, involving newspapers for a Persian/English audience, satellite television programs from Iran and Los Angeles, and Internet newsgroups, Web pages, and chat rooms.

The author argues that to understand Islam in Europe, scholars must take into account the diversity of Islamic practices, including different branches of official religions as well as their popular manifestations. Her resulting work offers a rare look at Shia Muslim traditions. Spellman introduces us to Shiite tenets and practices, and the stereotypes that have hindered scholarly research (it is often characterized as "pre-modern," "backward," or "folk" religion). She highlights a popular manifestation carried out by women. Like other religious forms, *sofreh* prayer gatherings increased in significance in concert with negative stereotypes of Muslims, for they are conducted in private Muslim/Iranian space, where women can speak in Persian, and hear news from Iran, and news about other migrants. The array of *sofreh* types



found in contemporary London is remarkable, and Spellman grounds her discussion of these rituals in a richly detailed elucidation of the overlapping social networks involved, and the mosques, cultural and educational centers, and charitable organizations associated with each network. In the process, she demonstrates how these rituals expose codes of class, nation, and gender, as well as competing notions of what it means "to be a good Muslim" and what it is to be a good Shia woman (2004: 81).

Sufi orders are addressed in another chapter. Spellman provides helpful background on the development of Sufi orders in Iran as well as across North America and Europe, attesting to the complexity of religious identities and their historical roots. She emphasizes the fluidity of boundaries between Islam and Sufism, noting that some Sufi orders incorporate five pillars of Islam into a new design (2004: 211). The employment by transnational imagined Sufi "communities" of technology and Web pages is nicely illustrated.

Iranians of Muslim background who converted to Pentecostal Christianity either in Iran or since the diaspora are the subject of a fascinating final substantive chapter. We learn the history of Pentacostalism in the United States, Protestant missionizing efforts in the Middle East in nineteenth century, the Pahlavi government's relationship with Protestant institutions, the rise of Pentecostal churches in Iran in the late 1950s, and their treatment under Khomeini. Some of the organizations discussed have the alarming goal "to convert all the Muslims in the Persian-speaking world to Christianity" (2004: 200).

From this work, we gain a rich sense of the complexity of religious practices of people from one country as they endeavor to find a distinct Iranian place in London. In a final section, Spellman discusses the changing ways *Noruz*, the Iranian New Year, is celebrated as members of more and less religious migrants come together, often bringing their non-Iranian friends. Spellman's discussion of this celebration elucidates her central thesis: that religious identity, like other forms of identification, should be viewed as an ongoing social process involving considerable evolution and negotiation.

## Globalization and the family

The shift to transnationalism has led many researchers to explore the impacts of globalization on the family, especially as increasing numbers of parents migrate without their children. Transnational families are seen by some scholars as a potential lens to explore the durability of gender norms and patriarchy. When women are left behind with

their children, they may be encouraged to take on some of the responsibilities normally assigned to men in that society. Conversely, when women are the ones who leave, there may be realignment in responsibilities associated with them to account for their breadwinning status. Some researchers argue that this can lead to an erosion of patriarchy, and, unfortunately, a rise in domestic violence against women (Kelson and DeLaet 1999). Others find a reconfiguration of patriarchy (George 2005). Evidence is building for both modifications in gender roles as well as their entrenchment with transnational families, and the following two books provide additional material to add to the debate. They are worth comparing, for one discusses the dire situation in the Philippines, a developing country in which the transnational family has become the norm, and the other brings our awareness to comparatively wealthy Taiwanese-American families, for whom this practice is a means to continued upward mobility.

Parreñas' study is based in the Philippines, where some nine million children under the age of 18 live without the physical presence of one migrant parent (2005: 12). This fine-grained ethnographic study is grounded in one of the most lucid presentations of the wider geopolitical and economic context that I have read, as Parreñas outlines the structural forces driving this mass emigration. She considers the paucity of options for economic mobility in export-oriented developing nations, the country's indebtedness and the associated structural adjustment programs it must comply with, and its growing dependence on foreign markets for imports. As the country must take on more debt to pay for existing debt, the government continues to cut spending on economic and social services. The average worker cannot get ahead and is increasingly vulnerable to fluctuations in foreign markets. Now, up to 54 percent of the total population is dependent on remittance from migrant workers (2005: 18).

One of the main motivations for parents to work overseas is to send their children to private schools so that they may be able to access more stable employment in the future. Ironically, the deterioration of local social services results in many of the workers, particularly women, migrating to the "global north" to assist in care work in these countries. As Parreñas writes, "for minimal cost, the global north secures good health care, which is needed to maintain an able-bodied workforce for the greater production and consumption activities in their local economies" (2005: 24–25). This is especially the case in industrialized countries that deem childcare a private expense, such as the United States and southern Europe (Spain, Greece, and Italy), where there is a greater reliance on the low wage work of immigrant care workers (2005: 26).



The rest of the book explores the consequences of this migration pattern on gender ideologies, daily practices of family members, and the children's welfare. Despite the fact that transnational families are now the norm in Philippine society, they are still badly viewed. The nuclear family, with its "providing father" and "nurturing mother," remains the ideal. Moreover, the children that Parreñas interviewed have very different associations with each kind of transnational family. They see men as leaving to provide, and women as leaving to escape poverty. In this way, children imagine their parents' migration in a way that does not challenge normative gender roles.

Gender again plays a role in shaping children's reflections on their experiences in these families. The absence of fathers is perceived as a gap, a sense of social discomfort or alienation bred from unfamiliarity, and she provides poignant passages in which young adult children discuss their awkward relationships with their fathers. But it is the children in mother-away families that seem to suffer the most. Despite the children's ability to articulate the reasons why the mothers are away, they still interpret this as a profound abandonment. Extended kin cannot replace the bond the children say they want with their mothers, and their statements attest to their feelings of tremendous loss. Parreñas outlines ways that extended kin and even support groups could be established to lessen the pain this experience seems to be causing.

Transnational families, particularly mother-away ones, have the potential to alter gender ideologies in Filipino society, and yet this has not happened. Father-away families mirror modern nuclear households, with the main difference being the temporal and spatial distance of the fathers. Rather than coming home at night for dinner, she tells us, they come home after ten months of work. The revolutionary potential of mother-away families remains unfulfilled as well. In other settings of transnational motherhood, scholars have found that this practice can expand notions of motherhood, but this is not the case here. In fact, the emigration of mothers can reinforce traditional views in paradoxical ways. The fathers left behind minimize their participation in household work, perhaps to assert their masculinity, leaving other kin to do this work. Children in these families, in Parreñas' experience, tend to be even more conservative in upholding normative gender ideologies.

Perhaps the most powerful chapter is that in which she discusses cases of prolonged separation. This is most frequent when parents are living in countries where they hope to establish permanent residence status and bring their children, such as the United States. The average age of separation between children and parents among the people

she interviewed was an astounding 12.6 years (2005: 143). The parents are in a terrible bind: They can't return home to visit their children because they will be declared "out of status," and usually the children are not granted visas to visit their parents.

In her conclusion, Parreñas reminds us of the topic she does not study, family reunification (foreshadowing, one hopes, perhaps another book?), in a discussion that adds to our growing sense of the potentially enormous impacts of the transnational family form on Filipino society. What will be the long-term consequences of this experience when parents and children are finally reunited? What will be the end result of all of these sacrifices made for the children? Will this become a pattern carried out by the next generations as well (2005: 166)?

In sum, through a beautifully and cleanly written text, Parreñas explores the role that gender plays in shaping transnational family dynamics, and how gender ideologies can exacerbate existing problems, especially for the children left behind. In her conclusion the author outlines ways the current situation might be improved. She promotes a greater acceptance of the malleability of gender and an incorporation of egalitarian views of men's and women's roles so that members of each gender are not punished by societal norms as they attempt to deal with global economic shifts in the optimal way for their children. Her suggestions are clear, sensible, and rooted in compassion for the people so afflicted.

## Globalization as asset

Maria Chee's study on Taiwanese-American transnational families provides a striking contrast to Parreñas' book. On the surface, these works appear similar, for the families are split apart for very similar reasons: to foster the children's education and thus enhance their chances for upward mobility. Yet the families Chee considers are considerably better off. They have developed a rather unique migration strategy: They send their children away to the United States with their mothers for their schooling in a contemporary variation on the continental boarding school practices of last century's American elite.

The transnational family is not a new phenomenon for Chinese overseas, and the author cites her own family as an example. Five successive generations lived apart for substantial periods of time. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, male sojourners traveled overseas, leaving behind women and sometimes children, with variable results. Families who received regular remittances could have lives of leisure, but women with less contact with their husbands often found themselves in dire poverty or at the mercy of other men. The migrant men, in turn, faced an impossible choice: If they remained connected to their families by returning home frequently, they risked spending their savings on transportation costs, resulting in little benefit to the family over the long term. Many men instead stayed abroad for decades, sometimes never to return.



Since the 1950s, Taiwanese migration has changed. It was first dominated by graduate students, shifting to chain and then kin migration with changing legislation. During the 1980s the flow shifted again, with entrepreneurial classes, those of "non working class background" seeking opportunities in the United States. It is this group that Chee will focus on, many of whom settled in southern California.

The decision to split the family apart by sending women and children to the United States is a main focus of this book. Economic factors played a role, primarily Taiwan's economic ascendancy, leading it to become one of the fastest growing economies in the world in the 1960s. In addition, schooling in Taiwan is extremely competitive, and the tracking system can lead to a perpetuation of class distinctions. Education in the United States, in contrast, is viewed as far more meritocratic, and parents decided that the best way to promote their children's welfare is move them to the United States for schooling. Chee's discussion of how we might apply Bourdieu's concept of social reproduction of class position to a transnational space (2005: 93) is quite interesting. By operating on a transnational stage, the family accumulates capital in one country of origin, transfers it to the children's education in the country of destination to convert it again into the children's future economic, social capital.

One could wonder why both parents don't migrate together to the United States Chee found that many men recounted clear disadvantages they face in this country, including the inability to transfer credentials from Taiwan, and persistent stereotypes and racism. A glass ceiling remains for white-collar Asian immigrants and even Asian-origin United States citizens. Some male migrants faced limited mobility or even downward displacement upon transferring to this country. Thus, while education here is seen as meritocratic, the workplace is not. At the same time, the income that they receive in Taiwan is substantial enough that they can support two households, including one in high-priced southern California.

Chee also considers how this transnational family form challenges existing gender ideologies and practices. She discusses the classic formulation of the gendered division of space, with men dominating the public sphere and women the domestic sphere. Taiwanese-American

transnational families complicate this formula. We could expect some extreme version of this dichotomy, with husbands at work in Taiwan and wives at home in another country. Yet Chee shows how roles are not divided so cleanly. Although several of the women she interviewed had careers in Taiwan before leaving for a mostly house-bound existence in the United States, they found that they had considerably more power in that household than they would have had if they stayed behind in Taiwan. They discuss their increased freedom, and the fact that they spent considerably less time on housework than when living with their husbands (2005: 190). And yet when women were the breadwinners who stayed behind in Taiwan while the husband moved to the United States with the children, the women carried out a "double shift," serving as both breadwinner and care-giver, as we find among many working women in the United States. In this case, they played these roles by traversing across the Pacific Ocean. The unwillingness of men to take on the "female" tasks parallels findings from studies in other societies (George 2005; Parreñas 2005).

Chee's chapter on the impact of the transnational family arrangement on marital relations is perhaps the most nuanced, and it benefits from her strong ties to the women she interviewed. She found that, rather than leading to marital dissolution or alienation, the physical separation tended to reinforce patterns that were already underway in the marriage. Separation even led to improvement in marital relations in some cases. Women discussed their husbands' typical life-style in Taiwan, involving drinking and socializing late into the night. One woman told her that after she left for the United States with her children, her husband learned to do household chores, and maintained regular ties via phone, email, and air travel. Chee also considers the question of family decision-making and power dynamics. She finds a double standard regarding male and female sexuality in Taiwan, with married men allowed to participate in extramarital affairs. While here more data (or another study conducted by male scholars) would help develop her findings, it appears that the men who stay behind may hire professional concubines, or even start a second family.

There are parts of this book that could merit from a wider literature review that transcends disciplinary boundaries to include earlier works on migration. The author notes that people in the past looking at migration have neglected women (2005: 4), but she does not consider the studies by Brettell and others that have been with us for some time, and which could have enhanced her findings. For instance, the creation of new families of largely women and children in the



United States is an interesting counterpart to the historical legacy of male migration and the resulting consequences for the family left behind, which has been studied extensively by Brettell (1986). In sum, this is an important work on a rarely studied transnational family form that provides an example of the ways globalization can be exploited by actors for their real advantage.

## When is it transnationalism?

Richard Antoun is a prominent anthropologist of Jordan whose field experiences in that country have ranged over four decades. This book was built on years of research, some of which was conducted while his focus was on entirely different processes. The reader benefits from his unusually deep temporal frame, which gives him a rare chance to judge just how different the contemporary era is from that in which he conducted his dissertation fieldwork back in 1959–1960. At least from the perspective from this part of the globe, there have been dramatic changes. The educational domain is perhaps the most telling: In the village in 1960, there were two one-room schools, for boys and girls through the sixth and third grades, respectfully. At that time, "it would have been unimaginable for anyone to suggest that large numbers of young men would leave the village and the country for higher education abroad on four continents and even more ridiculous to suggest that any women in the village would leave it to pursue a high school education, not to speak of higher education." Yet the next generation "not only imagined such migration, they realized it" (2005: 20). At the same time, a great number of these men have returned to the village or live nearby. The author hopes to explore the paradox and tension between the transnational world, and the "weakening but persistent community."

Most of this book is composed of individual chapters that trace the experiences of male villagers to different countries, where they moved at least temporarily to seek work or higher education: to the Arabian peninsula, largely for work, and to Pakistan, England, Germany, Greece and the United States, for higher education. The author's goal is to determine the degree to which individuals' transnational experiences have influenced their outlook into the present day. Did they integrate into the new society? If so, to what degree did they continue to identify as Jordanians, Arabs, or Muslims? Which factors in the host country prevented their acculturation? Not having lengthy connections with many of these interviewees or a sense of their views prior to departure, it is difficult to assess his findings. The author admits that his goals may be impossible to reach:

> It would be difficult, if not impossible to establish causal links between a particular migration experience and particular views on social questions in the home country. What can be established, however, is the existence of a diversity of viewpoints by migrants on particular social questions, reflecting different value orientations as opposed to a uniform viewpoint reflecting a single value orientation. It is the very fact of diversity of viewpoints that is the significant factor (Antoun 2005: 169).

Given the relatively short length of many of the migrants' stays, it is perhaps no surprise that Antoun found that migration to new locales does not necessarily lead to long-term changes or a diversity of viewpoints. This was especially the case for the migrants who lived for stretches of time on the Arabian Peninsula, where they were relatively isolated from the local population and other Jordanians, and thus concentrated on their ultimate goal of garnering wealth to send home. This physical separation, coupled with the relatively short-term nature of the stays, begs the question of whether or not these represent examples of "transnationalism."

The chapter on higher education in England and Germany is based on interviews with two men now living in Jordan who spent years in Germany studying medicine, and England studying linguistics. These men were also little changed by the experience, he finds (although it would be interesting to learn how Jordanians still living in either of these two countries might respond). Perhaps most surprising is the contrast Antoun found between the Greece-bound students and those who traveled to Pakistan. Here, language played a role: The Jordanian students already had some fluency in the language used in higher education and the lingua franca, English. However, as a result, they did not end up mastering local languages, and thus encountered a real barrier with their neighbors, unlike their counterparts in Greece, where a majority of the students married Greek women and where four settled permanently. In addition, unlike Greece, the Pakistani government does not concentrate the foreign students at the same universities, but distributes them across the country according to disciplinary focus, resulting in a less vibrant student social life.

Antoun conducted the most in-depth discussions with migrants still living in the United States. These discussions are presented as long transcripts of interviews conducted with four men living in Texas or Washington. This section resembles field notes and was hard to follow. What I found most interesting in this chapter, along with the lengthy discussions of exploitative work experiences that read a bit like a Jordanian student's version of *Nickled and Dimed* (Ehrenreich 2001), was his discussion of the men's often outright maverick American wives.



The comparative potential is great with a study of this scope. On the other hand, such a scope can hinder depth of connection to any one locale. This is what we find here. Antoun's relationships with the men interviewed were mostly short-term. The men remain rather two-dimensional (and many are identified with letters or numbers), so it is difficult to evaluate the ample quotations that Antoun provides from the informants. This book offers an interesting lesson in the importance of communicating peoples' subjectivity, the need to provide more than their voices, and the ways finely wrought ethnographic detail can allow the reader to develop more profound understandings of the problems addressed. In the final chapter, when Antoun wants to compare the individuals' experiences to seek patterns between the generations, his decision to identify the informants differently in each chapter becomes troubling, and the text begins to read like a complicated formula ("Ali and Zayd (Chapters 3 and 6), migrant 4 (Chapter 4), the son of D (Chapters 2 and 7), and the son of E, migrant 7 (Chapters 1 and 5) demonstrate" [2005: 249]).

While it is difficult to read this book as ethnography, this book does offer intriguing problems for future scholars to explore. Antoun uncovers an interesting paradox: The Jordanians had the least interaction with people with whom they shared language and religion (Gulf States and Pakistan), a moderate degree with open democratic countries "par excellence" (United States and Great Britain), and the most interaction with the country with which they shared neither language nor religion (Greece). This book also raises the question of whether transnationalism looks different when people are economic versus academic sojourners. How does the mere organization of a country's higher educational system shape the experiences of foreign migrants? Finally, should we view temporary residence outside of one's home country "transnationalism"? This ambitious work reveals fascinating patterns suggesting further studies of this kind. The reader completes the work wanting to send researchers to carry out more intensive research in each of these settings to test Antoun's intriguing conclusions.

## Portuguese "transnationalism"

As a book demonstrating the potential of a comparative approach Caroline Brettell's *Migration and Anthropology* is unsurpassed. While Brettell's own research is rooted in Portuguese immigration and emigration, she contrasts her findings with examples from around the globe. The fact that this book is a collection of articles published elsewhere should not deter readers: Each of the articles/chapters found here is a pivotal work covering subjects of great contemporary

interest—the role of the state, the impacts of migration on the individual, the consequences of mass emigration on the remaining society and its religious practices, and the integration of migrants into urban areas. Accompanied by a thorough introduction and introductory sections framing each of its sections, this book provides an excellent review of migration literature in anthropology since the middle of the last century, and a clear discussion of the ways this literature relates to that in other disciplines. Students of migration and diaspora will benefit from this work's lucid presentation, and graduate students will benefit from one of the most complete literature reviews this reader has seen is some time.

The introductory chapter places the anthropological study of migration in its historical context. It is sobering to consider how systematically the topic was excluded in early works, and this reader wondered to what degree this exclusion is responsible for the perception of novelty today. Throughout this chapter, Brettell weaves in a discussion of her own intellectual development, which will be of great interest to those who have been following her works or teaching with her books for years. In the process, she emphasizes how anthropological research provides a holistic, broadly based presentation of the topic.

In the first section of the book, Brettell considers the level of analysis, a thorny problem for migration and transnationalism scholars in any discipline. Should one highlight the wider macro level, exploring the political and economic circumstances encouraging emigration or immigration, or is it best to focus on the individuals and family actors involved? In this section, she outlines how the anthropological approach must consider both structure and agency, the wider context, the "meso" level, the social relational structures within which the individual operates (2003: 7), as well as individual subjectivities. This discussion is followed by two chapters that illustrate the significance of working at these different levels. The first is a real tour-de-force that considers the Portuguese state's ambivalence toward emigration. She explores the centrality of emigration to Portuguese national identity and concludes that, just as the "peasant" is "good to think" in France (Rogers 1987), the emigrant is a key multivocal symbol in Portuguese society.

In the second chapter, she offers a succinct review of the biography and life history literature in anthropology and explores how oral history material can elucidate our understanding of migration. She then presents results of her own research on Portuguese women who migrated to France. Extensive oral history narratives are then analyzed. These narratives illustrate the importance of focusing on the individual level: In doing so, the researcher is faced with idiosyncratic family histories that can influence someone's decisions and that can reveal unexpected "push" or "pull" factors that are easily missed in cost-benefit calculus. For instance, she finds that some Portuguese women migrated to France due to their beliefs that they would receive better treatment there (2003: 42).



The second section, "Return Migration, Transmigrants, Transnationalism" commences with an important literature review on transnationalism that places recent studies into a much richer historical context, one that includes the related study of return migration. Problems with identifying strict boundaries between return migrants, multiple returnees, and transnational communities are underscored. The first chapter explores the factors motivating return-oriented migration, such when migrants see it as a way to gain prestige and social mobility within their own social system (Brettell 2003: 64). This is reminiscent of almost every instance of transnationalism in the books reviewed here, including the Taiwanese-Americans and Jordanians migrating for better educational opportunities, and the Filipino families discussed by Parreñas. The Portuguese in Brazil and later in France provide an example of a population engaged in widespread labor migration while maintaining a strong ideology of return, or "*emigrar para voltar*" (to emigrate to return). The second substantive chapter adds to the literature that explores the impacts of emigration on the remaining society, in many ways, a precursor to Parreñas' work (2005). In this case, she explores the ways mass departure influences local religious practices in the village of Lanheses. Here, because of the remissions sent by the emigrants, local customs have not foundered but instead have been reinvigorated. The village *festa* has changed, however: "It has become both more elaborate and more religious and also more monetarized." In his book discussed here, Antoun (2005) suggested that out-migration could lead to increased liberalization in the men's outlook on such matters as divorce or the role of women in society. Brettell's findings suggest the opposite result: Because they are absent most of the year, the attitudes of the emigrants Brettell interviews remained more conservative regarding the Church and religious practices in comparison with those of the local community.

The third section contains some wonderful articles that broke new ground in migration studies and in the anthropology of the city. In the first chapter, we find her classic "Is the Ethnic Community Inevitable?" This is an essential work for anyone interested in the development of ethnic enclaves in urban centers. She demonstrates quite effectively the role of structural and political factors in determining whether or not migrants will settle in concentrated neighborhoods, and the kinds of behaviors and social networks that stem from the resultant residential

patterning. This is a topic of tremendous concern for many European countries that are experiencing ethnic neighborhoods for the first time in recent years. Likewise, her chapter on "Ethnicity and Entrepreneurs" provides an excellent introduction to the important category of the "ethnic entrepreneur."

Finally, anyone working on women and migration should read the last section, "Gender and Migration." Brettell has been at the forefront of this topic within anthropology. Her dissertation (1978), her books, *We have all Cried Many Tears: The Stories of Three Portuguese Migrant Woman* (1982), and *Men who Migrate, Women who Wait* (1986) were all groundbreaking and central to this field. In these works she considers the migration of Portuguese women to France and the impacts of gendered emigration on Portuguese society historically. We learn some of the latter findings in the chapter included here, "Emigration and Household Structure in a Portuguese Parish, 1850–1920." Scholars concerned with the impact of male migration in other parts of the world will want to read this piece. In it she outlines the ambivalent social status of the "widows of the living" and the ways women left behind played much more active roles in farm and household labor, a pattern that offers important insights for the very active debates about the impacts of immigration/transnationalism on gender roles. The final chapter explores the experiences of women migrants and the impact of female migration on family structure.

In sum, this book is a great introduction for new scholars of migration, and obligatory for anyone approaching the question in another discipline, for it offers probably the most richly interdisciplinary discussion currently available. In what remains, I turn to the question of its relationship to the new field of transnationalism.

## What does migration have to do with it?

There has been active debate on the continuities and discontinuities between "immigration" and "transnationalism." Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1993) have argued that transnationalism does represent something new, requiring a very different theoretical lens than the early focus on "migration," which carried with it an embedded understanding of the world from the nation-state perspective. As they write, "the new transnational migrant forges and sustains simultaneous multi-stranded social relations" that link together societies of origin and of settlement (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1993: 45). In her article questioning the novelty of transnationalism, Nancy Foner counters that much today is not new. Using the experiences of immigrants in turn-of-the-century New York as an empirical example, she notes the existence then of "transnational" families, the astounding number of remittances sent by United States postal service money orders, investment by migrants in projects in the home country, higher return migration rates than today, in some cases the regular rotation of migrants back and forth, and attempts to keep the homeland idea alive in the imagination if not in daily practice (1997).



Takeyaki Tsuda's remarkable study of Japanese Brazilian return migration provides further evidence for continuity rather than disjuncture. He questions the distinctions often made between transnational and localized communities. He looks at social relationships maintained across contiguous (face-to-face) and noncontiguous space (via electronic communication), a distinction he notes is analogous to Appadurai's spatialized and virtual neighborhoods (1996: 195). Transnational communities are "deterritorialized" in two respects: They transcend national boundaries and are constituted largely in this "noncontiguous space" (1996: 224). And yet, as Tsuda notes, this is the case today of almost any community that relies increasingly on electronic or long-distance communication. In this regard, he concludes, "the difference between transnational and other types of communities today is more a matter of degree than of kind" (2003: 248). Moreover, Tsuda does not find evidence of the "postnational" imaginary that has been optimistically posited. The transnational Japanese Brazilians he interviewed still view most of their experiences in "nationalized" terms (2003: 248). For them, the national is more important than the transnational as a locus of identification "precisely because of its territorialized nature" (2003: 249).

Tsuda's findings suggest that assumptions about the nature of the "new" migrant experience should be tested with careful empirical study and that bold claims about discontinuities in social life may have more to do with temporal depth or academic enthusiasm. When we contrast works on transnationalism with anthropological or historical studies of migration, as I have here, we often find more parallels than expected. When we do find striking contrasts, they are often the consequence of the time depth under consideration. Generation, for instance, plays a key role. The first- and second-generation Swiss immigrants of New Glarus, Wisconsin worked hard at creating a little Switzerland in this country, and vestiges of it still remain, albeit in altered form, a century later (Hoelscher 1998). Even contemporary works on transnational communities, such as that by Sheba George on a community of Keralites (migrants from the Kerala state of India) in California, finds distinctions in transnational ties between first-and second-generation immigrants and the future of the transnational community uncertain (2005).

It is impossible to resolve this debate here. However, if differences between "transnationalism" and "immigration" are more of degree than in kind, which I would argue they are, rather than viewing these as distinct disciplines (and thus whole literatures to ignore), we would be wise to read widely. Migration scholars have been concerned with communicating the experiences of people who by their very definition hold ties to multiple countries, quite like today's students of transnationalism. They have faced similar dilemmas of research scope and narration. Like contemporary scholars of globalization, they too have wondered how to convey the lived experiences of people while taking into account the wider structural processes impinging on their everyday lives. At the very least, their works may be fruitfully plumbed by the new wave of transnational experts for insights into past patterns and key themes, such as "transnational" family forms or the impacts of gendered migration on gender ideologies and the people remaining behind. Moreover, such works provide important examples of these scholars' resolution of familiar yet vexing problems, such as choice of level of analysis, strategies in incorporating subjects' voices, and the balance between structure and agency. For a book that considers all of these themes, they will want to start with Brettell (2003) reviewed here.

## Notes

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