

Children of global migration



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Rhacel Salazar Parrenas' book is mainly about the detailed interviews that she had with people that are migrants between the age of 17-24 as well as their guardians in Philippines. Many children talk about their perspectives on their parents when they had to leave them and the aspect of living in transnational households. It illustrates the child's perspective on international migration and shows what it is like to be a child who is nurtured from parents that do not live in the same country as them.

Parrenas also focuses on gender analysis by showing how traditional gender and care expectations influence the experience of children in transnational households and the experiences of migrant mothers and fathers. The author argues that the traditional values of the mother as the light of the house and the father as the pillar of the house confront migrant parents with very different expectations that they need to fulfill in order to live up to their children's expectations.

While the father is traditionally responsible for the economic well being of his family, the mother is the nurturer of the family; her main task is to provide emotional security for her children. As a consequence of fathers migrating to secure the financial well-being of the family and their traditional gender role affects migrant mothers' role and brings additional tasks into her responsible life. Mothers who migrate do not only have to provide material security to their children, but also have to continue to provide nurturing and emotional work from far away if they want their children to accept their migration.

In the Philippines, a dramatic increase in labor migration has created a large population of transnational migrant families. Thousands of children now grow up apart from one or both parents because the parents are forced to work outside of the country in order to send their children to school, give them access to quality health care or just provide them with enough food.

Analyzing the in depth interviews with the family members left behind, Parrenas examines two dimensions of the transnational family. She looks at the impact of distance on the intergenerational relationships, specifically from the children's perspective. She then analyzes gender norms in these families, both their reifications and transgressions in transnational households. Acknowledging that geographical separation strains family bonding, Parreñas argues that the maintenance of traditional gender ideologies becomes worse and sometimes even creates the tensions that outbreak many migrant families.

After reading Parrenas' work I find it sad to know that some of the fathers that are left behind with their children while the mothers are away would not step up and take on the mother's role. I feel like one of the reasons behind some of the father's actions is because of the pride that they have within themselves. I see this similarity not only in Philippines but in other Asian countries as well. It seems that as if men would feel less of a man if they would helped out around the house and do things like washing dishes, laundry, cooking. I feel that the drive behind this could also be somewhat cultural. Knowing that this is not a short period of time for the families to be split this way, the children obviously grow and become older. Therefore these everyday life aspects become engraved in their minds and shape their

lives, which in the end become a vicious cycle of possibility for this to happen to their children's future families.