
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Leinaweaver, Jessaca B., *Adoptive Migration: Raising Latinos in Spain*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013, 196 pages.

*Reviewer: Katrien De Graeve
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When Adoption Meets Migration

Anthropological interest in transnational adoption is relatively recent, with the early studies dating from the turn of the century. Since then, there has been a rapid proliferation of anthropological and sociological accounts that complement and criticize the individuated and often pathology-oriented perspectives on transnational adoption prevailing in psychological and pediatric studies of the subject. The urge to understand the social, political and historical contexts that shape transnational adoption has produced a fascinating body of critical research that portrays a complicated and intriguing picture of the structural and everyday lived realities in transnational adoption. This research has been produced at the interface of kinship, reproduction and family studies and post-colonial and critical race studies, with, in the last few years, increasing attention to transnational adoption as a form of migration, seeking cross-fertilization with insights from immigration and refugee studies. Jessaca Leinaweaver's *Adoptive Migration* is an important and fascinating contribution to this ongoing conversation.

The book brings together in subtle and unexpected ways various practices of child-rearing that are the result of different types of migration between Peru and Spain. Leinaweaver juxtaposes the adoption of Peruvian children into Spanish families not only with Spanish domestic adoptions of immigrant children but also with the family-making practices of both Spanish–Peruvian mixed couples and Peruvian labour migrants in Spain. Her account is based on meticulous ethnographic research in Spain, conducted between 2009 and 2012, and her previous fieldwork in Peru between 2000 and 2007, complemented with additional fieldwork in 2012. She draws on a range of sources of data, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation of public events, and textual and visual materials concerning adoption or migration. The insightful and simultaneous reading of family practices that are usually kept analytically separate generates fruitful insights, not only for adoption studies, but also for the study of immigration and its

effects. Moreover, her specific focus on children and families provides scope for the exploration of ideologies of kinship, parenting and family, both in the way they inform adoption and immigration policy and in the way they are mobilized in parents' moral discourses around children's best interest and parental responsibilities.

One central theme of the book is effectively summarized by the title. *Adoptive Migration* grasps the similarities the author observes between transnational adoption and other forms of immigration, and what these parallels teach us about the connections between kinship and integration in contemporary multicultural societies. The phrase underlines the migratory aspect of international adoption, which often tends to be obscured within dominant adoption discourse and practice. But it simultaneously hints at the adoptive aspects in processes of integration and assimilation and the capacity of the host society to adopt (the difference of) immigrants. Leinaweaver convincingly explains how adoptive parents' preference for infants (Chapter 1) can be seen as exemplary of the expectations imposed on immigrants in European countries and of the limits to the differences that citizens of these countries are willing to adapt to. Infants' assumed ability to be completely absorbed into the host family and nation turns them into ideal immigrants within imageries that equate interculturality and immigrant integration with cultural assimilation. Leinaweaver's juxtaposition illuminates how "the burden is on the migrant to acculturate, not on the Spaniard to learn to understand and value difference" (22). Moreover, zooming in on labour migrants' narratives of child-rearing (Chapter 2) confronts us with how migrants' lived experiences of being an immigrant in Spain influence their ideas of what is the best country for children to grow up in. These narratives expose the ethnocentric nature of prevailing adoption discourse, which tends to view European countries as necessarily better places for children.

A second leitmotif in Leinaweaver's book is the ideology of *national substance*, which imagines national identity as an essence, intricately bound up with a wide range of other, often less palpable identity markers, such as race and culture. The author skilfully brings to the surface the various ways in which an ideology of national substance operates and is differently mobilized under differing conditions. Couples in mixed marriages (Chapter 3), who are privileged in transnational adoptions on the basis of their presumed retained "intangible package of Peruvianness" (68), and the blurring of boundaries in "domesticated" adoptions of immigrant children (Chapter 4) poignantly

exemplify how nationality serves to produce (or complicate) relatedness and imageries of good homes for children. In her discussion of various expressions of solidarities between adoptive families and immigrants (Chapter 5), Leinaweaver shows how the presumably shared national substance is reified in a context of everyday racism and globalized inequalities. Racialized ideas that imagine culture and migrant status as almost biologically inheritable provide the ideological background that makes immigrants and adoptees conceptualize themselves as tied to Peru in crucial ways or, conversely, contest the Peruvianness imposed on them. Leinaweaver's description of practices of becoming and unbecoming Peruvian (Chapter 5) subtly portrays this double bind that adoptive parents and their children experience, oscillating between compliance with Peruvian cultural identity as a source of strength and a refusal to be positioned as an outsider.

Adoptive Migration is written in accessible, vibrant and meticulously argued language, which makes it interesting and enjoyable reading for both academic and broader audiences. The remarkably non-judgmental stance Leinaweaver takes is rare in the current public and academic debates on transnational adoption, which tend to be polarized and polemic. Deeply aware of and embedded in the post-colonial critiques raised in critical adoption studies, this book chooses to provide an anthropologically "thick" description of a diversity of migratory practices, capturing reality in all its complexity, nuances and ambiguity. The novelty of the book lies primarily in the clever correlations that carefully deconstruct divisions in everyday and academic discourse. It is the unexpected overlaps that provide us with fresh eyes for a critical evaluation and further theorization of various aspects of transnational adoption and migrant integration. One point that deserves to be further developed is the critique Leinaweaver initiates of the centrality of an ideology of national substance in the ethical principles of international policy frameworks for child protection. By advocating continuity in child-rearing along national lines, the subsidiarity principle adopted by the Hague Adoption Convention glosses over national heterogeneity and the complexity and fluidity of national identity in an increasingly mobile world. This and other issues raised in this wonderfully rich book will undoubtedly inspire scholarly work in the years to come.

Abu-Lughod, Lila, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013, 324 pages.

Reviewer: Marc-André Morency
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In autumn 2013, the province of Quebec's leading party (the Parti Québécois) promoted Bill 60, which would potentially lead to a ban on all ostensible religious symbols in the public apparatus. It quickly became clear that the Parti Québécois was mostly interested in banning the hijab, therefore targeting Muslim women. The party argued that a *Charter of laïcité*, in this precise version, would improve equality between men and

women, assuming that the latter, especially veiled women, need emancipation. But "Do Muslim Women Need Saving?" (2013), asks Lila Abu-Lughod.

As I read her most recent book, links were easily drawn with the Quebec context. This reveals the accomplishment of one of her self-defined tasks: to offer a West-reflexive discourse to challenge certain public opinions regarding Muslim women. Here, the anthropologist found inspiration outside the academic theoretical agenda. She focused rather on the necessity of questioning a dominant frame of thinking, in the global Western public, about Muslim women's rights. More precisely, Abu-Lughod asks, "What can thinking about their circumstances teach us about values like choice and freedom in the context of human lives—any human lives?" (26). Therefore, Abu-Lughod's book is less concerned with Muslim women than it is with power-embedded truth assumptions, themselves produced and reproduced by specific discourses in the global arena.

The book is the result of Abu-Lughod's long intellectual journey into Muslim women's lives, especially in rural Egypt. Methodologically, it thus reveals itself as a synthesis based on data collected in the last few decades. The author writes in a fluid, clear and welcoming style. Theoretically, she stands close to Talal Asad's (2003) and Saba Mahmood's (2005) post-colonial thinking. Each in their own way engage in a critique aimed at the Western secular hegemony, located in the modern discourse of the Enlightenment which frames (non-Christian) religion as its non-modern other, constantly asked to prove its adequacy to modernity by cleansing itself of particularism, violence, superstition and so on. With Mahmood, Abu-Lughod also shares in this book a critique aimed at a certain liberal feminism that often appropriates agency for itself, thus denying Muslim women's voices and power to act for themselves, even through social constraints. Precisely, "one of the things we have to be most careful about is not to fall into polarizations that place feminism, and even secularism, only on the side of the West" (44).

To me, the book develops around two major thrusts. The first four chapters (Chapter 1, "Do Muslim Women (Still) Need Saving?"; Chapter 2, "The New Common Sense"; Chapter 3, "Authorizing Moral Crusades"; and Chapter 4, "Seductions of the 'Honor Crime'") are devoted to the strong reflexive argument generally aimed at "the West." Among others, one major theme in these chapters concerns a new global *genre littéraire*, a "pornography of suffering" as the author calls it, based on biographical accounts of "liberated" Muslim women. In fact, these "suffering vignettes and extreme cases tell us little about the variety of ways women experience their lives and the contexts we must appreciate in order to make sense of their suffering" (78). In the final two chapters (Chapter 5, "The Social Life of Muslim Women's Rights"; and Chapter 6, "An Anthropologist in the Territory of Rights"), Abu-Lughod shifts her gaze to the second major thrust of the book, the development discourse and the "rights" concept: "an ethnographic approach that tracks the social lives in which the concept partakes may be more useful for understanding this subject and the movement we are living than moral posturing that judges women's rights to be either collusion with imperialism (to be denounced) or a hopeful sign of universal emancipation and progress (to be celebrated)" (170). Let us now look at the general argument of the book by outlining especially important themes, independently of the chapter they belong to.

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