

Religion and Gender, vol. 2, no. 1 (2012), 186-189

www.religionandgender.org

URN: NBN:NL:UI: 10-1-101598

ISSN: 1878-5417

Publisher: Igitur Publishing (Utrecht)

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Review of Glenda Tibe Bonifacio and Vivienne SM. Angeles (ed.), *Gender, Religion, and Migration: Pathways of Integration*, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2010, ix + 304 pages, ISBN 978-0-7391-3313-2

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On a typical Sunday, in the ‘immigrant gateway’ city of Miami, Florida, a humble storefront Pentecostal church holds a seemingly endless, emotionally charged gathering, drawing a large assembly of Jamaicans, the state’s fastest-growing migrant and ancestry group. Earlier that day, thousands of miles away in the (by Japanese standards) cosmopolitan City of Kobe a palatial, immaculate Roman Catholic church, rebuilt after the memorable Great Quake in 1995, offers a solemn ‘international’ Mass to its diverse ethnic Asian flock, among which Filipinos are the most arresting and engaged celebrants. These two immigrant faiths contrast sharply in terms of sociocultural contexts, religious fabrics, and *modi operandi* as regards worship, but share a clear gender disparity, marked by an exceeding female presence vis-à-vis the firm male grip on institutionalized power. This observation from my own fieldwork illustrates how gendered perspectives enable valid comparative research into the complex nexus between immigration and religion where opportunities for doing so may seem superficially limited. This fieldwork reflection also ushered me to the anthology under discussion here, *Gender, Religion, and Migration*. As the order of the words in the title indicates, the book places gender at the

heart of its methodology and theorization, instead of simply adding it as a supplementary variable. It is, as the editors claim, 'so far, the first collection of works focusing on gender, religion, and integration in migration across different geographic areas' (p 3), and thus makes an addition to underrated yet longstanding scholarly efforts to genderize international and transnational migration studies. And more importantly, the volume serves as a fresh warning against downplaying the importance of gendered perspectives in the growing scholarship of immigrant faiths.

There is another shared thematic focus, which weaves these ethnographies from different geographic and temporal contingencies into a heuristic comparative study. The contributors carefully avoid the ideological dichotomy between the roles of religion as either facilitating or obstructing the incorporation of immigrant minorities into mainstream society and culture. The book draws attention to the obvious yet often overlooked empirical fact that religion is a sociohistorical and cultural configuration. Displaced by globalization and ending up in host societies (usually in their lower social strata), immigrants and their local-born offspring realign their religious expressions and ritual practices within the sociohistorical conjunctures and power relations of their new environs. As a result, religion has various implications for the integration of immigrant minorities, not *per se* but in its articulation with diverse contextual conditions, including but not exclusive to when and why they settled, where in the socioeconomic hierarchy they are located, how they are publicly perceived, whether and to what extent they retain or re-establish relations with their place of origin, and so on. Examining religion with the concept of agents, or agency, in a broader sense (inclusive of contextual conditions of possibility), each contributor to this volume has unearthed the 'ironic' (p 9) or 'double-edged' (p 18) roles it plays. In its comparative case studies, the book draws a complex picture of how immigrants take distinct paths of assimilation despite their affiliation to the same religious/denominational traditions.

Evolved from an international workshop panel that took place in Melbourne in 2007, the book contains fifteen ethnographic accounts, which aptly reflect the currents of international migration and the resultant shifts in the global religious landscape, and are geographically sorted: Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America. In what follows, I can only discuss a few examples, unfortunately.

The co-editors have arranged the book in such a way that, following their introductory chapter, it opens the major discussion with the experience of Filipino domestic workers (by G. T. Cruz). It is most likely, as I

see it, that their own research experience and reflections had convinced them that the Filipino experience could serve as a basis to address the issues of gender and religion in migratory processes, being a quintessential case of the post-1970s feminization of international labour migration, and the diaspora population so far best documented. Drawing on the experience of Filipino working-class migrants in Hong Kong, Cruz brings to light the antithetical implications for migrant minority's gender and assimilation of religion which frames 'faith-informed strategies for survival... [and] liberation', while recasting and in a sense reinforcing the traditional gender-based marginalization and discrimination through the 'spiritualization and valorization of suffering' (p 25, 32). Comparing then two traditional recipient North American cities, Philadelphia and Alberta, Bonifacio and Angeles demonstrate that Catholicism forms the foundation of Filipino immigrants' sense of community. Catholic institutions and church-related activities serve as 'spatial mechanisms' (p 266) which establish and reinforce bonds across class, locality, immigration status, and the like (chapter 15).

One third of the collected ethnographies explores in different populations and in distinct contexts how adherence to Islamic tenets, beliefs and institutions either encourages or discourages the development of social capital and civic engagement by immigrant minorities. According to H. P. Nielsen (chapter 8), in Denmark, the struggle for/over assimilation and citizenship necessarily poses vexing identity questions to immigrant Muslim women in the face of the dominant discourse on social integration and 'secularism' in this Nordic country. As a result they follow apparently contradictory strategies of challenging a stereotyped image of Islam as repressive of women's rights, while, at the same time, downplaying and carefully preventing their religious heritage from being overtly public. In France, on the contrary, as the following chapter written by Stambouli and Soltane demonstrates, its policies on Islam, rooted in universalism in the public and political sphere, have placed exponentially expanding numbers of immigrants of African and North African origins in a 'double absence' (p 148), both caused by and resulting in an increase in the construction of ethno-religious enclaves. However, within these enclaves and as a result of the apparent failure of French conceptions of integration, the market of ethnic and salvation goods provided immigrant Muslims with stations for segmented assimilation. Also it created space for its female sections for negotiating a new role and position, whereas otherwise they would have remained as powerless and immobile as in their home countries. As reported by Maria de Castro (chapter 10), in Brazil, such economically

delineated ethno-religious enclaves have helped immigrant Muslims realign their religious faiths and expressions as a diacritical symbol, which shields them from stigmatization and public repugnance. As a result, however, it simultaneously preserves cultural capital in the migratory process, including traditional religious views of women.

The book includes an ethnographic account (chapter 7 by G. Hüwelmeier) of Vietnamese labour immigrants in Germany, who profess charismatic Pentecostal Christianity. Pentecostalism has probably drawn as much scholarly attention as Islam in terms of the intersection of gender and religion, because Pentecostal tenets, rituals and institutions apparently expand women's autonomy and equality, while retaining or even reinforcing a patriarchal interpretation and structuring of human relations. Not unlike most of the scholarship of this globalizing form of Christianity, Hüwelmeier's paper addresses the question 'why charismatic Pentecostalism appeals to so many women' (p 115). More than the regular weekend gatherings, church-related activities (e.g. prayer meetings) and co-congregant outreach programmes of civic participation (such as hospital visitation) occasion and stimulate working-class and less-educated women to develop their leadership and organizational skills. It allows them to expand their autonomy and enables them to emerge as powerful agents within their own social milieus.

For those who are looking for empirically grounded studies into the genderization of immigrant religiosity, this book is a true treasure trove. However, the collection falls far short of its claimed ambition with regard to the theorization of immigration and religion. I wish I could have learnt more about what other contributors than Bonifacio and Angeles derived from the application of Thomas Tweed's theoretical frame 'dwelling and crossing'. I cannot agree more when these editors argue that using these spatial and aquatic – as opposed to structural – metaphors can highlight the fluid and dynamic nature of religions (p 5). However, despite the editors' statement of accepting Tweed's concept as the shared theoretical orientation, readers will find that this important proposal is explicitly enacted nowhere else but in Bonifacio and Angeles' own chapter.