Book Reviews

A Courtship After Marriage: Sexuality and Love in Mexican Transnational Families. Jennifer S. Hirsch. Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2003. 376 pp. ISBN: 0-520-22871-5. $24.95 (paper).

Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America. Matthew C. Gutmann (Ed.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2003. 418 pp. ISBN 0-8223-3022-9. $24.95 (paper).

Though recent demographics show that the Latino population is the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States, research focused specifically on these families has remained very limited. Two recent publications look at Latin Americans and their families, both within the United States and in various locations in Latin America. As the title implies, Jennifer Hirsch's book, *A Courtship After Marriage: Sexuality and Love in Mexican Transnational Families*, creates a vivid illustration of the impact of immigration on Latino men and women's marriages and intimate relationships. Hirsch conducted extensive life histories with Mexican immigrants in Atlanta, Georgia, and their relatives who live in Jalisco, Mexico (26 adult daughters, 8 of their husbands, and 9 of their mothers). Coming from a tradition of women's studies, Hirsch uses detailed ethnographic portrayals to show how these individuals have replaced traditionally prescribed notions of marriage with contemporary ideas of companionate relationships.

In Chapters 1 and 2, she provides a nuanced accounting of her participants' lives and the methods she used to enter into the confidences of the individuals in these transnational communities. Hirsch uses Chapter 3 to demonstrate how the idea of courtship (*noviazgo*) has changed from a focus on devotion and respect to a newfound importance placed on having fun and winning the confidence of one's future companion. Intimacy and trust (*confianza*) have begun to take the place of both the notion of honor (*respeto*) and the concept that one must prepare for a respectable marriage to a respectable partner. Hirsch goes on to illustrate the global rise in companionate relationships and marriages, supported by the research of scholars from every continent.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Hirsch demonstrates the shifts in the gendered ideologies and practices of men and women in her sample of Mexican nationals. She affirms the work of Gutmann's *The Meanings of Macho* (1996), demonstrating that in many instances, men have turned from a traditional ideology of *machismo* to a more egalitarian identity, including involvement in housework, child care, and faithfulness to one's spouse. Hirsch also notes that this transformation is occurring for many women as well: allowing women to be more social (i.e., to go out drinking), to work full time, to visit their friends and relatives, and have greater decision-making power in their relationships and families. She shows that many couples have even changed their way of talking to each other. Citing studies and examples from her own interviews, Hirsch reveals that in contrast with earlier generations, these couples are more likely to openly talk their minds, speak more civilly, and express consideration for one another's "free will" and rights within their marriage.

Compared with previous studies of Mexican immigrant women, Chapter 6 creates a more complex understanding of these women's resources and bargaining power. Hirsch depicts immigrant women's resident status, English proficiency, employment, and social networks as interwoven resources that give certain women in the United States new freedoms and constraints within their relationships. She also demonstrates that although the saying "*En el Norte la mujer manda*" (in the [United States] the woman gives the orders) may fit for some women, this saying does not hold up in all marriages. Chapters 7 and 8 draw this book to a close with an extraordinary glimpse into the meaning and emotions behind women's sexuality and their choices about fertility. She shows how both sexuality and fertility have been socially constructed and continue to change for both Mexican immigrants and Mexican nationals.

The second book reviewed here, Matthew Gutmann's *Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America*, brings together current research and essays of noted scholars who study Latino and Latin American men. Each of the 16 chapters puts aside stereotypes about these men and passionately addresses their issues and the meaning relevant to their experiences. I would not do this book justice without briefly mentioning some of the diverse ideas and take-home messages that each of these chapters has to offer.

Chapter 1 includes Gutmann's overview of the topics and areas of study that are of particular importance to the well-being of Latin American men. His introduction places each of the following chapters within the purview of men's studies, with a focus on the Latin American contexts that influence men's lives. Chapters 2 and 11, by Mara Vigoya and Miguel Díaz Barriga, respectively, explicate the "boom" in diverse research on men and masculinity in Latin America that has occurred over the last decade. Mara Vigoya uses examples from this research to demonstrate the intertwined roles of social context, fatherhood, inequality, social class, and employment on men's construction of masculinity. Paralleling many of Vigoya's ideas, Miguel Díaz Barriga uses a social inequality perspective to describe how class, race, and region are changing Chicanos' narratives about themselves.

Chapters 4–7 illustrate various men's experiences and the meaning related to their experiences as men in Latin America. Augustín Escobar Latapí uses Chapter 4 to describe the restructuring of urban Mexican men's roles and gendered relationships that are related to women's increased workforce participation, loss of loved ones, migration and immigration, marriage, and the birth of a child. In Chapter 5, Francisco Ferrándiz illustrates how the harsh circumstances of life in a Venezuelan shanty town influence the opportunities for men to realize certain expectations of manhood. Norma Fuller's chapter discusses how working-class men in Peru use their work, their marriages, and especially fatherhood to create a masculine identity. Chapter 7 by Stanley Brandes shows how Alcoholics Anonymous fills a void for alcoholic men in Mexico City who have lost their roles as heads of their households.

Chapter 14 by José Olavarría demonstrates how Chilean men are taking on egalitarian roles within their homes by increasing their involvement in child care and housework. Olavarría also reveals the ambiguity that these men face balancing marriage, employment, and fatherhood with few models of how to create a successful balance. In an unusual ethnographic narrative, Claudia Fonseca uses Chapter 3 to explore the everyday references to cuckolds (husbands who remain with their adulterous wives) and philanderers (men who marry older women who are well off) common in a Brazilian working-class neighborhood.

Gutmann includes chapters by Florencia Mallon, Peter Beattie, X. Andrade, and Donna Guy (Chapters 8, 10, 12, and 16) that use a historical angle to understand how political and social climates relate to changing masculinities of individuals in Latin America. He also is careful to include more diverse experiences of men in chapters by Daniel Balderston, Richard Parker, and Héctor Carrillo (Chapters 9, 13, and 15), which examine the emerging acceptance and complexities of homosociality in Latin America. The interdisciplinary and international approach of this book demonstrates the worthwhile benefit of studying men. Gutmann illustrates that these scholars do not wish to thwart feminism; rather, they look to expand our understanding of class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, and how each of these influences gender relations. Though the scope of this book is huge, the authors pay simultaneous attention to the minute details that give a living voice to these Latin American men. Overall, this book is a valuable collection for researchers wishing to understand the meaning of manhood and masculinity for Latino and Latin American men.

These two books provide two distinct yet complementary viewpoints about the lives of Latin American men and women. Whereas Gutmann's work pulls together diverse glimpses into the lives of Latin American men from many countries, Hirsch sets down one of the most in-depth examinations of immigrant women and their personal relationships in both Mexico and the United States. Each of these books shows that Latinos and their families find themselves in increasingly complex circumstances and must be understood in light of these complex contexts. In conclusion, I would definitely recommend each of these books to researchers, policymakers, educators, counselors, and other interventionists who work with Latinos and their Latin American counterparts.

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Home Bound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries. Yen Le Espiritu. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2003. 271 pp. ISBN 0-520-23527-4. $21.95 (paper).

What is a home? In this book, Yen Le Espiritu examines how Filipinos/as are affected by the experience of migration, (neo)colonialism, and racism, and how they transform the social world in which they live by "home-making—the processes by which diverse subjects imagine and make themselves at home in various geographic locations" (p. 2). She argues that home-making involves both inclusion and exclusion, and that homes can be imagined, invented, and remade in a place not home, creating a real or symbolic "safety net" for immigrants. Her argument that "we need to conceptualize immigration as a technology of racialization and gendering" (p. 207) that can both reproduce and challenge inequalities sets out a useful goal for scholars of migration. Espiritu reminds us that homes can be idealized, which can be problematic, particularly for subordinate groups.

The book is a case study of the Filipino/a American community in San Diego, long a focus of settlement for immigrants from the Philippines. Espiritu combines interviews with Filipino/a immigrants and their children, historical and statistical data, and insight from personal experience in the community. Woven throughout the eight chapters are two central themes: maintaining boundaries and transgressing them. The first section provides historical perspective, reviewing the context of U.S. colonialism and neocolonialism in the Philippines that produced the immigrant flow to the United States (Chapter 2), and documenting the cultural history of this immigration and subsequent "differential inclusion" in U.S. society (Chapter 3). In the next section, Espiritu describes the ways that immigrants attempt to connect to the Philippines (Chapter 4) and reconstructs life in the Filipino/a American community in San Diego during different historical periods (Chapter 5). The last section of the book contains three chapters that approach home-making with an intersectional lens. Chapter 6 examines the two biggest waves of immigration—Filipino navy men, particularly stewards, and professional Filipina nurses—through a gender and class lens. Espiritu finds that immigrants' decisions to migrate were gendered: The navy men wanted to be better economic providers and more desirable marriage partners, while the nurses wanted to see the world and gain independence. In Chapter 7, Espiritu considers the family dynamics of Filipino/a immigrant parents and their daughters, and shows how gender boundaries cause conflict within immigrant families. In Chapter 8, she draws on data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Studies, in addition to interviews, to show how U.S.-born and/or raised Filipino/as construct overlapping identities that challenge dominant U.S. ideologies.

Thorough, well-written, and accessible to multiple audiences, this book uses first-person narratives and story-telling to draw the reader into the lives of the people studied. Espiritu expands the lens to consider broader social processes that influence the "multifaceted movements across borders" (p. 4) that shape so many modern lives.

One strength is Espiritu's focus on how (neo)-colonialism has shaped immigration to and from the Philippines—from colonized nationals in their "homeland" whose lives were shaped by U.S. influences to "differential inclusion" and racism in the United States. She shows that migration is not just about arrival and settlement, but transnational home-making and "home-orientation." This is useful because it recognizes the dual here/there sense of home that so many immigrants share, and is sensitive to what "going home" and maintaining connections with the Philippines mean to immigrants—a chance to gain status, a sense of belonging, a means of fulfilling family obligations, and so on.

Espiritu also does an excellent job using gender as a lens to analyze the relationships that women have to home. She aptly challenges multicultural celebration of ethnic traditions that constrain women. She points out that women, in general, often bear the burden of maintaining cultural traditions, like preparing special foods and celebrations, and are thus central to home-making—a role that has advantages and disadvantages. Espiritu illustrates how parents attempt to control their children's behavior—particularly that of their second-generation daughters—by saying that when they make independent choices, they are betraying their culture and are not culturally authentic. For instance, in their attempts to control their children, many parents elevate the chastity of their daughters and criticize the "looseness" of U.S. women.

These examples demonstrate that family relationships are central to immigration, and that home-making involves not just nurturance but conflicts between family members. Espiritu recognizes the role of family in immigration—pointing out that households are often not unified in their decision to migrate, and that families are often the sites of negotiation and conflict, but this insight remains underdeveloped. I am left wondering how families resolve these conflicts, and how gender and class may play a role. Nonetheless, this is an excellent book and it would be a good addition to courses on migration and the immigrant experience, transnationalism, and postcolonialism.

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Families of a New World: Gender, Politics, and State Development in a Global Context. Lynne Haney & Lisa Pollard (Eds.). New York: Routledge. 2003. 300 pp. ISBN 0-415-93447-8. $23.95 (paper).

Consistent with Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory, this anthology focuses on the associations between macrosystems (politics, economics, public policy, law, social services, media, agriculture) and the family microsystem. The text's framework is a feminist analysis of state development in a historical/cultural context. Chapter authors note the ways in which macrosystems affect men and children, but the greatest emphasis is on women's familial experiences or imagery of women in the family. The text provides a diverse sample of cultures; chapters address families in countries such as Australia, Chile, China, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Malawi (when it was still the British Protectorate of Nyasaland), Puerto Rico, and the United States.

The text is divided into three sections: (a) familialism as state imagining, (b) familialism as state building, and (c) familialism as state reform. The first section focuses on events from the early 19th century to the mid-20th century. The first two chapters (and a similar chapter in the second section) analyze how British/U.S. colonialists applied a Euro-American definition of the appropriate family structure to justify limitations placed on indigenous women and families in Egypt, Puerto Rico, and Nyasaland. The authors indicate that colonialists work from the premise that certain states and groups were unprepared for self-rule until a Euro-American model of family was adopted. A third chapter in this section details the description of family and gender in the Zionist movement. This chapter connects individuals' relational histories with their artistic and activistic expressions of family values.

The second section on state building examines the ways in which states actively engaged in family reform. This section centers on events from the late 1800s to the 1950s in Chile, the United States, and Australia. In each country, the family was perceived to be a foundation for the state because the family was the source of productive citizens. Individuals, communities, and the state were expected to benefit from successful families. Because the family and state were mutually dependent, the state used a variety of resources (e.g., material incentives, legal sanctions) to promote the desired family structures and relations.

The last section has three chapters that focus on more recent (1950s to the present) developments. These chapters delineate changes in (a) Hungary and the Czech Republic following the decline of socialism, (b) Germany following reunification, and (c) China following the implementation of household registration to control urban female workers. Given the contemporary nature of the events, these three chapters contain qualitative data from interviews with women who identify the direct and indirect effects of such events on their family lives. The final chapter tracks American public policy toward men during the 20th century. This chapter underscores how men and women are hindered by policies that presume that all men have adequate opportunities to fulfill the breadwinner role.

The text has some notable strengths. First, the authors appear equally knowledgeable about political/legal systems and family systems. Second, the authors rightly note that countries that share a geographic region are not automatically similar in their public policies and services. For example, although Hungary and the Czech Republic are both considered part of Eastern Europe, Hungary family services decreased while Czech services increased. Similarly, the chapter on British Nyasaland (Malawi) highlights familial dynamics within a specific African country rather than a continental description of African families. Third, the chapters address a variety of macrosystem factors rather than a singular focus on political structures. For example, one chapter traces how water irrigation was used to attempt to create self-sufficient U.S. families.

There are some limitations that should be noted as well. First, the chapters do not consistently describe the legacy of historical events on current family functioning. The editors noted that the book explicates how historical events affected women and families, but there is inconsistent description of the continued effects of these events. The power of historical legacies has been noted in some American family contexts (e.g., Halverson, Puig, & Byers, 2002; Pinderhughes, 2002); it would be helpful to learn about such legacies in other countries. Second, some chapters have an overreliance on quotations; such chapters would have benefited from fewer examples and more analysis of the issues. Third, some background information on historical events appears to drift from the chapters' main points.

Overall, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The text has a feminist focus, but it does not isolate women s experiences from family processes. Each chapter clearly focuses on familial structures and dynamics. The text can make a significant contribution to the international family studies literature.

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Halverson, K., Puig, M., & Byers, S. (2002). Culture loss: American Indian family disruption, urbanization, and the Indian Child Welfare Act. *Child Welfare*, *81*, 319–336.

Pinderhughes, E. (2002). African American marriage in the 20th century. *Family Process*, *41*, 269–282.

Parenting in Poor Environments: Stress, Support and Coping. Deborah Ghate and Neal Hazel. London and New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Limited. 2002. 314 pp. ISBN 1-84310-069-X. $28.95 (paper).

The study reported in this excellent book was commissioned by the U.K. Department of Health and carried out by the Policy Research Bureau. Evidently, part of the remit was to produce a clear steer for policy development, which the authors provide, but this is also high-quality academic work, which is sometimes difficult to achieve within the constraints of such commissions.

In the United Kingdom, we are well provided with quantitative evidence about the extent and nature of poverty in our society. Fewer studies exist that give insight into the everyday experience and meanings of poverty. The research reported in this book fills some of those gaps with regard to parenting. It draws on face-to-face survey interviews with a nationally representative sample of parents (n = 1,754) living in objectively defined "poor environments," and 40 in-depth interviews with parents in especially difficult circumstances. The research drew on an "ecological" model of parenting, which encompasses the different levels of individuals, families, and households, and the community or local environment. The authors address whether families in poor environments are subject to stressors known to increase the risk of difficulties with parenting; the interface between stress factors, social support, resilience, and coping with parenting; and what parents themselves want from social support.

Much of the value of this book lies in the sensible, sensitive, and conceptually reflective way in which findings are discussed and unpacked, always valuing the respondents as the best commentators on their own lives. The study concludes that because of elevated levels of adversity for parents and their children, and often quite clearly because of poverty as a distal factor, parenting in a poor environment is undoubtedly particularly difficult and fraught with risks. Nevertheless, this book encourages us to question some well-worn stereotypes. For instance, although we are not surprised to be told that parents in poor environments are in substantially worse physical and emotional health than the rest of the population, there are fewer dramatic differentials in their children's physical and behavioral problems, though the authors acknowledge that children growing up in poverty may be storing up problems for the future. Similarly, with regard to the problems of lone parenting, logistic regression analysis shows poverty rather than marital status to be the significant factor, often suggesting that life with a partner is not necessarily any rosier.

Although many parents readily identified problems with their neighborhoods and local areas, and these risky environments (neighborhood incivilities, housing conditions, physically dirty and degraded environmental conditions) became riskier the poorer the area, most respondents said that their area was a reasonable place to bring up children, that local people were friendly, and that they knew some neighbors personally. Finally, support was investigated not just in terms of feeling supported but in terms of actual enacted support. Unsurprisingly, those who said they were coping well with parenting also said that, in the main, they felt well supported, whereas the minority who said that they were not coping well tended to say that they felt unsupported. Here, the authors unpack well the moral and practical constraints and downside of needing and receiving support for parenting, showing how respondents told of its often evaluative and reciprocal nature.

The study is not without limitations, but I see these as derived principally from the probably quite tight remit that the researchers accepted. For example, it is disappointing that gender issues could not be drawn out. The authors explain that this is because only 8% of the sample (139 respondents) were males who self-identified as the main carer. However, of the lone parents (39% of the total sample), many felt that, despite material disadvantage, they often fared better unencumbered by a male; a quarter of partnered women in the sample said that conflict or lack of support within the partnership caused them stress. The hidden roles and views of fathers, both positive and negative, merit greater illumination. Similarly, there is scant attention to the role of employment (or unemployment) in structuring/being structured by day-to-day parenting; it is simply dismissed as a variable that was not found independently to enhance coping. Issues of ethnicity are little discussed, perhaps unsurprisingly in a nationally representative study in the United Kingdom, where 89% of the sample is classified as "white British." Last, there is little sense of the dynamics of parenting in this study, and perhaps not enough reflexive attention is paid to the limitations of insights gained from abstract, generalized, "normative" questions rather than those that are more grounded, personalized, and contextualized by respondents themselves.

The study should also be commended as an exercise in combining methods. It sensitively weaves together the two data sets, learning as much from their contradictions as from their complementary insights. Occasionally, though, we must lament the inadequacies of our methodological tools: the authors' reflective deconstruction of "coping" sits uneasily alongside one question in the survey about how parents see themselves as coping these days. Nevertheless, this is a clearly written, accessible book with excellent summaries, and should be essential reading for students, academics, and those involved in policy and practice.

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Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction and the State in Kenya. Lynn M. Thomas. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2003. 300 pp. ISBN 0-520-23540-1. $24.95 (paper).

Referencing the complicated meanings of sexuality, intimacy, and family, a recent article in the *New York Times Magazine* asked, "Why is it so hard to loosen the grip of AIDS on southern Africa?" (2004). The answer to that question lies at the heart of Lynn M. Thomas's very fine book, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction and the State in Kenya*.

Politics of the Womb explores the political significance of campaigns by both colonial and postcolonial states and the White missionaries within them to police women's sexuality and reproduction in 20th-century Kenya. Through her lucid investigation of campaigns to control female initiation, abortion, childbirth, and premarital sex and pregnancy, Thomas skillfully provides a multilayered analysis of the symbolic meanings and tactical gains of the policies enacted by state and missionary actors, and the local efforts to adopt and resist them.

This book is organized into five substantive chapters. The first examines both the efforts to control rituals of female initiation (clitoral excision) and the campaigns against abortion. Thomas shows how these issues became intertwined as babies born to uninitiated women came to be seen as a moral danger to their communities. Equally problematic, the new policies required male involvement in this traditionally female realm. Building on this framework, Chapter 2 identifies how the introduction of hospital-based maternity services emerged from—and created—struggles between colonial governance and local autonomy, and in gender and generational relationships. This chapter not only engages the goals of policymakers, including their desire to transform female initiators into officially trained midwives, but also provides a thoughtful examination of the local meanings of such policies to the women they targeted.

Chapter 3 provides a fascinating account of how young women ignored the ban on excision and began to circumcise themselves. Although this was a conscientious effort to resist state policy, it also represented an intergenerational challenge in which young women rejected the tools and ceremonies that belonged to the older women, formerly charged with performing excision. According to Thomas, other theorists have identified "'the female circumcision controversy' of 1928–1931 as a crucial moment in the emergence of nationalist politics within Kenya" (p. 80). Yet, she rightly points out that most analyses of this political moment ignore the powerful gender and generational forces at work, and do not adequately explain why so many women chose to defy the ban. Striving to provide this analysis, she clarifies, "Their faith in the ability of excision to transform girls into women and ensure proper reproduction was something that both preceded and exceeded anticolonial resistance" (p. 81).

Chapters 4 and 5 move forward in time to "Late Colonial Customs," during which time a hybrid of traditional juridical custom and formal state-run legal proceedings arose to adjudicate cases of nonmarital pregnancy. Chapter 4 chronicles the creation of pregnancy compensation law that allowed male guardians to receive monetary payments from men responsible for "spoiling the daughter" (p. 104). Chapter 5 examines the next generation of family law, the Affiliation Act, which allowed women to sue for child support that was ongoing and paid to them rather than to their male relatives, and granted women custody of their children. Thomas elucidates how these efforts to create formal state law were bound by competing local customs that remained strong, particularly in rural areas. Yet, government administrators' willingness to defer to local custom also created binds for women who wanted the protection promised by state law. These chapters also reveal how state actors attempted to use biomedical science in deciding pregnancy-related cases as a way of providing neutral fact and credibility, but did so without precision or expertise. In the postcolonial era, the Affiliation Act was repealed because it became locally viewed as a "foreign law" that had been a "corrupting influence" (p. 156). As nationalism became central to Kenyan politics, many of the gains women had made —including the ability to survive as single mothers—were lost.

Thomas's generous use of cases and anecdotes makes this dense book not only accessible, but also engaging. Perhaps most important to those who are interested in the intersections of state, family, gender, and culture beyond this particular context is Thomas's exposure of the state as a fractured institution whose pieces promote competing and sometimes contradictory policies. In this vein, we see that "progress" is double edged, and that the very meanings of "foreign" and "traditional" are cross-cut by race, gender, geography, and generation in complicated ways.

Although the impressive historical work could stand alone, Thomas devotes her conclusion to modern politics of the womb, including ongoing debates around female circumcision (now termed "female genital mutilation"), international family planning, and HIV/AIDS. In doing so, she reminds us how the politics of the womb shift, change, expand, contract, and remain central to the political enterprise.

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Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy. Peggy Reeves Sanday. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2002. 253 pp. ISBN 0-8014-4004-1. $29.95 (hardcover). ISBN 0-8014-8906-7. $19.95 (paper).

Written in a clear style, this fascinating book is based on the author's two decades of fieldwork among the matrilineal Minangkabau tribe, one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia. This society describes itself as matriarchal, using the European-derived term "matriarchaat" for the purpose. Sanday investigates and analyzes this depiction. She challenges older male-centric theoretical approaches to gender, power, and social organization, which sought to locate female power and authority in mirror images of those of males, consequently rejecting the idea that there could be any meaningfully matriarchal societies in the modern world. Feminist critics of the latter approach label it as androcentric; the reason is that it neglects the social power of dominant maternal meanings because women do not follow masculine paths to power (e.g., politics or public life). Thus, from this perspective, no society could ever meet the definition of "matriarchal" as "it had been defined out of existence from the start" (p. xi).

Sanday contends that "The concept of matriarchy is relevant in societies where maternal symbols are linked to social practices influencing the lives of both sexes and where women play a central role in these practices" (p. xii). Redefining gender relations and concepts of power, she proposes a new definition for the term matriarchy: "cultural symbols and practices associating the maternal with the origin and center of growth processes necessary for social and individual life" (p. 237). Sanday prefers to use the term matriarchy rather than other proposed terms (e.g., gylany, matrix, matrifocal, matricentric) that link sexes rather than rank them because of the respect accorded to local usage in the Minangkabau society: "adat matriarchaat." She thus aims to refurbish and retrieve the word.

The book provides evidence for her contentions on key domains of social lives and relationships among the Minangkabau people. Matrilineal descent and inheritance, matrilocal residence, marriage practices, social identities strongly defined through female ancestry, and cultural symbols rooted in the maternal and nurturing aspects of nature all paint a picture of female valuation and sources of symbolic and economic status that contrast starkly with those found in patriarchal societies. Most remarkably, Sanday finds that domestic violence and rape, locally considered abhorrent and evil, are nearly absent in this society.

How does this culture emphasizing matriliny and female power coexist with Islam, the predominant religion of the area, which is commonly viewed as patriarchal? The Minangkabau world view emphasizes cooperation, not dominion. Therefore, strands of diverse beliefs and practices are strongly intertwined in this culture, so that "adat," Islam, and the state government are seen as the three strands that form the rope that guides their lives. Rooted in primordial traditional stories and reinforced through ceremonies, social interaction, and myriad daily actions, adat is of core importance in upholding Minangkabau matriarchy. The complementary male and female practices of adat all focus on consensus, coexistence, and compromise. Therefore, genders are interlinked rather than ranked. Islam is practiced in this setting as a religion that ensures female value, emphasizes cooperation, and is defined as a mindset and a way of ordering relationships rather than a rigidly codified and enforced set of beliefs and practices. The role of the state government is viewed as a means of last resort because it depends on exercising power, and conflict as a means of solving disputes is seen as a grave failure. In short, female power and valuation in Minangkabau society are rooted in a worldview that takes cooperation and nurture as a fundamental principle of society rather than seeking control or domination.

The result is a depiction of an apparently idyllic society that seems to be free from the structural inequalities and power struggles that seem ubiquitous elsewhere and are often considered a basic characteristic of human societies. In fact, Sanday asserts that "Mutual agreement is the ultimate sovereign in Minangkabau life, taking precedence over the power of men or women as a group" (p. 174). Thus, although gender roles differ, gender inequality does not automatically follow. The society seems similarly equally free from class distinctions, labor relations, and income inequalities. In fact, the matriarchal adat way appears to have neutralized social structural cleavages altogether in this agrarian society.

Can this exemplary community stand the test of modern pressures, including globalization, consumer culture, mechanization and commodification of agriculture, fundamentalist religion allied to political movements, and so on? In this book and her related web site, *Matriarchy and Islam post 9/11: A report from Indonesia* (http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~psanday/report_02.html), Sanday asserts that pressures in the past have strengthened adat matriarchaat by more strongly intertwining Islam and adat so that both are strengthened, particularly after 9/11. Minangkabau society is aware of the dangers accompanying Western-style capitalism and anti-Western Islamism, and even more strongly and consciously supports adat matriarchaat as defenses against both.

Sanday's book greatly expands the literature in numerous ways. Although Sanday cautions against viewing this culture as unique or exotic, such a remarkable society stands out in the overwhelmingly problem-focused literature in anthropology, sociology, gender, and culture, which concentrate on power and conflict issues that seem endless and inevitable. Her redefinition of matriarchy will energize current debates on gender, power, and social organization. Anticipating that this view of matriarchy appears to essentialize gender roles and relationships, she upholds her more empowering version in contrast to current essentializations that lead to division. Her review of the prior literature on matriarchy in her final chapter provides a concise and focused summary of the main threads. Several additional theoretical and research questions are sure to be raised by this book. Comparisons between the Minangkabau who espouse adat matriarchaat, and other groups where matriliny has withered and gender relations are increasingly patriarchal, will rise. Other societies will be reexamined in order to recognize the hitherto unrecognized roles of women. In conclusion, this book is an important and welcome addition to the wide literature on gender and power.

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