

Their connections are not necessarily to single or dual nationalities, but to family members, de-territorialised social networks and multiple localities in different countries' (p. 162).

The individual approach to the research participants is the strongest element of this analysis, and means that the voices of migrant children in Ireland are heard.

## References

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**Leisy J. Abrego (2014). *Sacrificing Families. Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 250 pp.**

Leisy J. Abrego's book is a sociological study of Salvadoran labour migration to the United States, which focuses predominantly on life stories of migrant parents and their children who are left behind. By 2008, there were about 1 million Salvadoran immigrants in the USA. This makes Salvadorans one of the biggest immigrant groups in the USA.

The empirical material behind the findings presented in the book consists of 47 interviews with Salvadoran parents living in the USA and 80 accounts collected from children who remain in El Salvador. The research presented by Abrego in *Sacrificing Families. Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders* gives readers insights into the complex situation of Salvadoran families divided by space as a result of international mobility.

*Sacrificing Families* foregrounds the voices of immigrants for whom labour migration offered the hope of better life chances for their children, and as

such it is a first-hand account of Salvadoran transnational families' lives.

The book consists of eight chapters. In the first part, the author introduces case studies of Salvadoran transnational families, describing their reasons for migration and the initial issues they faced as regards job opportunities and their expectations about work and life. The second part of the book focuses on problems resulting from the separation of family members, the consequences of migration and the complex situation of children left in El Salvador.

*Sacrificing Families* examines the individual and societal impacts of Salvadoran families' migration as it relates to various dimensions of family life. Abrego describes different types of transnational families from El Salvador to aid readers' understanding of the issue from a variety of angles. She shows the social diversity in El Salvador, which goes some way towards explaining why some parents decide to migrate to the USA and leave their children in the care of family or friends. The author's interview data and analyses reveal the struggles of those families.

Abrego presents individual experiences of separation, mostly long term. For some families, this difficult separation is at the same time their sole survival strategy. For others, it is a way of ensuring their children's future prospects. Abrego concurs with other researchers who observe that global inequalities put pressure on parents from developing nations to strive for a better life and result in decisions to engage in labour migration.

The striking presentations of Salvadoran children and their parents, covering not only their social situation but also the emotions hidden behind outward appearances, demonstrate strongly that Salvadoran immigration problems in the USA are about much more than mere statistics. Abrego underlines this at the start of her book: '(...) debates about immigration and globalisation are not just about numbers; they are about human beings' (p. xiii). Abrego's analysis of the emotions is helpful for identifying the various reasons that push Salvadoran parents to migrate.

Abrego shows that the situation of Salvadoran immigrants and their families does not always change after migration. Parents' dreams of a well-paid job are

shattered by the sad reality of a difficult and complicated life in the USA. Efforts to overcome everyday problems, together with the impact of immigration policies and gender inequalities, constitute structural barriers which prevent Salvadoran immigrants from reaching their economic goals.

Abrego shows how unsuccessfully the American government has tried to regulate immigration in recent decades, with immigration policies regarding visas and other permits becoming stricter.

Salvadorans escaping from civil-war violence could not count on help from the US government, which only granted political asylum to 3 per cent of Salvadoran applicants. In 1990, organisations which support refugees were able to convince Congress to give Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Salvadorans (p. 15). Unfortunately the programme was suspended. TPS was finally re-launched after a series of earthquakes in El Salvador in 2001. However, this status does not imply an easy route to American citizenship. TPS, according to Abrego, puts Salvadorans in 'a space of liminal legality' where immigrants have some benefits such as work permits and ID cards, but they cannot travel abroad as legal residents of the USA (p. 91).

The immigrants started to engage in illegal practices which seem to have made them feel unsafe in the USA. The 'game' between immigrants and the American government produces illegality with all kinds of consequences. Abrego describes these processes as the 'production of (il)legality'.

The historical and cultural complexities of migration from El Salvador to the United States are described in Chapters 1 and 2. Abrego's arguments are embedded in historically factual descriptions and discussions of the shape of this population flow, which is mostly linked to the 1979 civil war in El Salvador. By the end of the war in 1992, thousands of immigrants had already fled the country (pp. 12–14).

The author highlights the interdependencies of the USA – El Salvador flows, especially as regards the characteristics of those who leave, and the evolving immigration policies and regulations between the two nation-states. The law has either hindered or facilitated labour mobility at different points in time.

Abrego provides an analysis of the structure of gender production (p. 11). She examines the relationship between gender expectations and familial ties by analysing the construction of motherhood and fatherhood in El Salvador. The structure of gender production in El Salvador leads to inequalities of opportunity for immigrants in the US labour market, mostly for Salvadoran women. The majority of female migrants from El Salvador are in lower-status jobs, earning less money than men (pp. 112–113). Standards of living depend on the USA labour market situation, while all kinds of gender inequalities make daily survival even harder for Salvadoran immigrants.

The second part of the volume is devoted to findings from interviews with children left in El Salvador. Loneliness, feelings of abandonment, sadness and psychological problems are just some of the emotions found in the children's stories. At the same time, Abrego claims that those feelings are difficult to measure because of aspects specific to the individual and subjectivity. In her interviews, she focused on the words which children use to describe their situation. She attempts to identify the role played by long-time separation between parents and their children in the various kinds of consequences found across transnational families.

Abrego's conclusions are directly linked to her interview data. In seeking to discover what parents and children thought about labour migration to the USA after some time spent apart, she asked a provocative question: 'Is family separation worth it?'

Children and their parents whose financial situation changed positively thanks to hard work in the USA are willing to say that separation is a fair price to pay for their new prospects in life. Families where limited change occurred take a different view. The most complex problems are to be found in those families where long-term separation has created psychological and physical problems. This question shows how hard it is to analyse Salvadoran transnational families.

Abrego's book fully answers the question of how those families function during a period of separation and why the decisions they make change their life chances.

Finally, Abrego asks why these families need to make so many sacrifices and why they have to experience separation across national borders. She points to global problem of ‘limited economics [*sic*] opportunities (...) [that] drive parents to opt for migration as their last hope – despite the financial, physical and emotional risks’ (p. 196). She emphasises that restrictive immigration policies can make people’s lives unbearable, especially because of the limited opportunity for family reunification.

Abrego opens a debate in American society by asking: ‘Are we comfortable being a country that legally enables human rights abuses of migrants? What are we willing to do to stop the sacrificing of those [Salvadoran] families?’ (p. 196).

Leisy J. Abrego’s *Sacrificing Families. Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders* will be of particular interest to researchers interested in compelling portrayals of transnational families and the issues they face in the twenty-first century.

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**Magdalena Lesińska, Marek Okólski, Krystyna Slany, Brygida Solga (eds) (2014). *Dekada członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Społeczne skutki emigracji Polaków po 2004 roku*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, pp. 335.**

### **Post-Accession Emigration from Poland: A New or Old Kind of Emigration? Notes on the Book**

In 2014, ten years after Poland joined the European Union, numerous summaries were made on the impact of accession upon various dimensions of economic, political and social life; accession also had a significant impact upon Polish migration. The book *Dekada członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Społeczne skutki emigracji Polaków po 2004 roku* [*A Decade of Poland’s Membership in the European Union. The Social Consequences of Emigration from Poland After 2004*] (Lesińska, Okólski, Slany and

Solga 2014) is an extended report by the Committee of Migration Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (2013), devoted to the impact of accession to the European Union upon foreign migration by Poles, and the consequences thereof. The publication focuses on two subjects: a description of post-accession migration and its impact on demography, the economy, and society at the national and regional level; and the influence of post-accession migration on transformations affecting Polish families and the Polish diaspora.

Let us begin with a description of post-accession migration from Poland (already the subject of a rather extensive literature, of which part was collected in the bibliography for the book’s second chapter (Lesińska *et al.* 2014: 25–44). Accession to the EU and the consequent opening of the Union’s job markets to Polish workers created a significant increase of the stream of migration from Poland, and this is certainly the most important consequence of accession in the area of migration. Estimates show that in the 2005–2012 period about 2.25 million people emigrated from Poland, over 5 per cent of the country’s population (*ibidem*: 48–51).

In addition to the significant growth in the number of emigrants, post-accession emigration differs from previous waves of migration in several important respects. First, the destinations of emigration: before EU accession, Polish emigrants mostly chose Germany as their destination; following accession, however, the UK and Ireland became the preferred destinations – whereas in 2002 there were 2,000 Poles in Ireland, this number grew to 200,000 in the next five years, which is mainly an effect of the opening of labour markets by those countries directly following accession. Second, the type of migration changed: before accession, emigration was mostly grounded in migrant social networks, while in the following period individual migration became dominant, at the same time leading to a more diverse geographical origin of emigrants – before accession, most emigrants originated from regions of Poland with a strong tradition of emigration, while after accession the geographical distribution of the origin of emigrants became more balanced, when network-based migration ceased to dominate. And third, post-