

Migration and New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia. Mirca Madianou and Daniel Miller. Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2012. ISBN: 9780415679282

In their work *Migration and New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia*, Mirca Madianou and Daniel Miller combine their ethnographic research with Filipino migrant parents and their children with a thorough theoretical rationale for their study. In their introduction, Madianou and Miller acknowledge that their study is a part of a larger field studying migrant transnationalism, but also make a compelling argument for the uniqueness and importance of their own work; since female experiences- especially mothers' experiences- of migration have been routinely ignored. Their choice to focus on the Philippines is also well supported, as the Philippines has a long history of government support for workers moving abroad to send home remittances. As the authors mention, the Philippines is also known as "the texting capital of the world," and, as such, makes it an ideal site to explore issues of new media and transnational families.

The authors chose to interview overseas foreign workers (OFWs) from the Philippines, and these interviews provide compelling evidence and case studies throughout. Each of their claims is backed up by personal anecdotes, and the authors acknowledge possible discrepancies to account for different experiences. After a thorough introduction that details the pre-existing literature on maternal migration, the subsequent eight chapters cover the history of, and reasons behind, migration from the Philippines, the different types of media that assisted and continue to assist transnational parenting, mothers' and children's experiences of mediated relationships, and the theoretical implications of these examinations.

After providing a thorough overview of communications between OFWs and their families, Madianou and Miller turn to establishing a definition for polymedia and to crafting a theory of mediated relationships. Due to the fact that so much parenting must occur at a distance between the OFWs and their children, their relationship shifts due to the nature of their communication. The authors contend that polymedia, (the plethora of different forms of communication), now open to families, allows both parents and children to respond and react differently. Before the rise of electronic communication and roaming phones, letters existed as the primary means of communication. For children, letter writing existed as a daily or weekly chore, and they were encouraged to only include good news, news that would justify the parent living far away from home to provide for her family. With the explosion of social media, parents can engage in a more active form of surveillance, probing hidden meanings behind online posts. As the authors note, mothers love having increased powers of surveillance, while children resent the intrusion on their personal/public spaces, especially as the mother remains physically absent.

Through careful and close analysis of their interviews, the authors developed a working definition for polymedia, connected to how transnational families utilize polymedia. Polymedia, with the prefix “poly-,” meaning “many,” assumes that the family in question has access to six or more different types of communication (including letters, texting, webcams, blogging, Facebook, email, and cassette recordings), and is media literate, and so is able to use the Internet, and is able to afford the different types of media. In their interviews, many of the problems the authors identified in the breakdown in communication between mothers and their children resulted either from the mother’s

computer illiteracy and inability to take advantage of polymedia, or from the lack of infrastructure at the child's home, thereby impeding any form of communication.

Though the book examines a specific subgroup of families, the implications of their study can be applied more broadly. In this heavily mediated age, families of all types experience new forms of mediation, with both parents and children using social media to both communicate and hide information about themselves. Though at the time of their study, the Filipino participants interviewed did not use Twitter as a form of communication, it would be interesting to explore the effects that newer forms of media, including Twitter and Instagram, have on these relationships. For those looking into cultural issues resulting from Filipino migration, this book would serve as an invaluable text. This work would be a good supplementary text for anyone interested in studying forms of parental - specifically maternal - attachment and for anyone examining broad trends in familial communication. As a gender studies or women's studies text, certain chapters would be extremely relevant to studying how women respond to abusive relationships or how women craft independent careers and lives outside of motherhood.

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