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Marja Tiilikainen, Johanna Hiitola, Abdirashid A. Ismail,
Jaana Palander (Eds.):
*Forced Migration and Separated Families: Everyday Insecurities
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It's not an exaggeration to say that international migration has been among the most pressing and important issues so far. Among all the types and different categorizations, forced and voluntary migration are the two overarching categories in international migration literature that encompass different trends and realities. Transnational families inherently place themselves as a reality in the literature of international migration with its special emphasis on the concept of the family. The book *Forced Migration and Separated Families: Everyday Insecurities and Transnational Strategies* edited by Marja Tiilikainen, Johanna Hiitola, Abdirashid A. Ismail, and Jaana Palander (Tiilikainen et al., 2023) therefore plays a much-needed role to delineate the interplay between forced migration and transnational families.

There are studies (Aden & Westphal, 2025; Kallio, 2019; Madziva, 2016; Urbańska, 2016) that focus on the transnational family and forced migration relationship, but they provide a limited perspective as they often portray explorative findings. This book elegantly discusses the gaps in the literature by centering on a human security perspective (Crawford & Hutchinson, 2016) through illustrating everyday insecurities. The book also contributes to the existing literature in transnational family dynamics (Baldassar et al., 2014; Baldassar & Merla, 2013; Hiitola et al., 2020), family reunification (Strik et al., 2013), forced migration (Bloch & Donà, 2018; Zetter,



2018), and care relationship (Bryceson, 2019; Carbajal et al., 2024; Dallemagne, 2018; Fan & Parreñas, 2018). It is a notable contribution to address this issue in a way that the forced migration phenomenon is a concept that is also defined and employed in a wide variety of transnational family settings. Before discussing the quality and limitations of the book, it is appropriate to take a closer look at the title, as it underlines and refines the interrelation between forced migration and separated families with operationalizing everyday insecurities and transnational strategies. The everyday insecurity concept is brilliantly selected to exhibit everyday experiences, understandings and strategies in addition to the concept of human security. Accordingly, the content of the book is designated in three parts. The first part is the introduction part, in which the scope and approach of the book is eloquently described by shedding light on the following parts. The second part resourcefully establishes the every-

day insecurities faced by transnationally separated families from a wide variety of backgrounds. Lastly, the third part aims to exhibit the effective responses and the processes of waiting for family reunification. In this regard, the family reunification concept connects diverse theoretical and practical issues in that the book centered on the “left behind” members of transnational families through elaborating it in various settings from policy implementation to everyday strategies. Exhibiting everyday strategies from various settings is ambitious, yet the book successfully managed by employing cases from Finland, Brazil, Israel, Nigeria, and Somalia. It’s also worth noting the expressiveness of associating the issues of everyday insecurities with effective responses and waiting for family reunification through the situations of limbo in border regions, gender and queer perspective, managing family as separated households, and family separation and ontological security.

Chapter 1 clearly identifies the close connection between forced migration and transnational families by putting special emphasis on the left behind members; by demonstrating the varying applications of international protection as not all compelling reasons were recognized as the grounds for protection in different nation states. Because often voluntary and involuntary factors coexist, it becomes even more important to look to the concept of everyday insecurities while dealing with forced migration and transnational families. At this stage, Chapter 2 provides a legal framework by making a comparative legal analysis of Sweden, Finland, Germany, the US, Brazil, Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan. This chapter successfully demonstrates the stratified and varied nature of migrants’ rights which are determined according to income requirements, migrant statuses, identification of familial structure, and biometric technologies. Chapter 3 illustrates this stratified nature in Finnish case law by underlining the strong position of the Global North as these countries establish a strong legal barrier by interpreting cultural norms into legal frameworks, which in turn are closely associated to the family reunification. On the other hand, Chapter 4 strikingly emphasizes the forced migration and transnational family

relationships in the Global South. Despite the liberal family reunification policies and autonomy of migration approach in Brazil, this chapter reveals that transnational families often face everyday insecurities through bureaucracies which lead them to develop financial, protection, health, childcare strategies. Conversely, Chapter 5 discusses how Israel's asylum policies toward African migrants lead to administrative violence. Chapter 6 unpacks the reasons for migration – it discusses that forced migration does not have to stem from violent incidents. The case of transnational families in Nigeria argues that the need to improve socioeconomic security of oneself increases the probability of irregular migration. Chapter 7 eloquently demonstrates the importance of remittances and how they are closely related to the social status and precariousness of the left behind members of transnational families and illustrates everyday insecurities when they lack remittances.

Part III of the book starts with Chapter 8 in which “dreamer parents” deported to Tijuana, the US and Mexico border city, and reveals the effects of deportation then which turns into a limbo situation. In addition, the situation of Syrian refugees in Jordan, Chapter 9, and in Germany, Chapter 10, analysis is centered on the concept of managing a family in dire conditions with special emphasis on waiting for family reunification procedures, but fortunately with the help of technological tools. Lastly, Chapter 11 explicitly demonstrates that even though material security conditions were provided, long term family separation hinders establishment of ontological security. But on the other hand, Chapter 12, by analyzing the experiences of a transgender asylum seeker from Pakistan, strikingly shows how the security concept can have surprising aspects that sometimes family separation itself is used as a strategy for personal wellbeing, opposing the Eurocentric understanding of transnational family norms and values.

The book's strength lies in demonstrating how multifarious it is to maintain transnational family dynamics in forced migration situations. The multifariousness stems from the factual versatility of each case's social, economic, and political contexts. Literature on international migration and transnational families generally approach these topics from the host country's perspective. Even though it is practical to focus on this perspective as often migrants and families are at their utmost need to solve their practical problems in education, health, security, and legal matters; the book brilliantly demonstrates it is equally valuable to look to the “left behind” members and their everyday insecurities, as family dynamics often are there to be addressed.

However, I would like to contribute to book's purpose by proposing a limitation in which the book requires further development in emphasizing the root causes that create the everyday insecurities by looking in depth. It would provide a more complete picture if there were further analysis on the mechanisms of reproducing these insecurities in national and global contexts. Such an approach would lay the foundations to understand the liabilities that would be held for the poverty, wars, ecological crises that gave rise to the forced migration which is the central topic of the book.

Even so, this book offers empirical and theoretical data to understand dynamics and root causes of forced migration in transnational family situations. It is significantly insightful for academics to further discussions, and an invaluable contribution for policymakers to mend the precarity that was delineated throughout the book. Because forced migration and transnational families are defined and approached differently, as to the reasons for migration, requirements for legal recognition varies; this book has the potential to be the guidebook to ease these insecurities.

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