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# **SOCIAL TRANSFOR MATIONS**

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## **Women Empowerment or Disempowerment?**

### **A Case Study of a Social Microfinance's Activities and Gender Relations in Rizal Province**

Women's empowerment has been at the center of the development discourse as one of the eight declared Millennium Development Goals. To date, an increasing number of development organizations are focusing on helping poor women achieve economic sustainability, and social enterprise in its microfinance scheme is playing a leading role in providing women with needed capabilities to increase their agency in the development process. The success of microfinance in empowering women today has been a debatable subject in the economic and development realms, thus leading to a need to reassess some of the microfinance claims. How does it really empower women? In which ways can microfinance assistance lead to an unintended and unfavorable effect of the disempowerment of women? To analyze and broaden existing understandings of women's empowerment, this research qualitatively investigated the process of women empowerment through a selected case study of a social microfinance operating in Rizal province, Philippines, using combined sociological and anthropological methods.

**KEYWORDS:** Women's empowerment, social entrepreneurship, gender relations, microfinance



## **Intermittent Departures, Returns, and the Incremental Acts of the Everyday**

### **Paid Domestic Work and Insurgency in Sitio Sibol, Bohol**

Our understanding of maids and their condition is confined within the current discourse of domestic labor exploitation and its general assumptions. This study presents an expansion of the discussion as experienced by residents of Sitio Sibol, Bohol including past experiences of NPA (New People's Army) insurgency and counterinsurgency that partly played an instrumental role in shaping the maid's experience. Informed by ethnographic research among former and current maids and their community in Sitio Sibol, this study problematizes how the changing context in the community affects the emergence and proliferation of local domestic work. It traces back the community's history and analyzes both individual and collective experiences, attitudes, and practices as exercises of human creativity when faced with adversity and different conditions of injustice. The shared community life in the *sitio* established active and passive social networks; and changing political conditions shaped and illustrated the complex process of "*pagpapa-maid*" revealing realities of human costs usually unaccounted for.

**KEYWORDS:** maids, local domestic work, migration, labor enskilment, rural community, insurgency

## **Race, Gender, and Photography** Images of Filipino Women at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition<sup>1</sup>

Photography served as an effective tool in gaining and presenting knowledge about Filipinos during the early part of American imperialism in the Philippines. There are several important works on the power of photography in relation to American imperialism and representation of Filipinos, but none have focused on the representation of women in American colonial photography. This research looks at women's representation in the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, where more than 1,100 indigenous Filipinos were brought to the United States of America to be exhibited in the World's Fair. With the use of intersectional feminism as a lens, the representation of women in the said event will be analyzed, with particular emphasis on the interplay of race and gender as units of analysis. This paper will show that if photography can be used to tell the truth, it can also be used to propagate racial and gender stereotypes.

**KEYWORDS:** 1904 St. Louis Exposition, photography, intersectional feminism, race, gender.



# BOOK REVIEWS

TERRENCE CHONG, ED.

## **Pentecostal Megachurches in Southeast Asia** Negotiating Class, Consumption and the Nation

Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2018, 243 pp.

When the term “megachurch” is employed in works regarding the sociology of religion, the discussion typically revolves around the church’s efficient growth. This growth-centric perspective is often explored at length when considering the contributions of the megachurch as a method of organization for typically Christian churches. However, in understanding the megachurch, much more needs to be examined. Edited by Terence Chong, the *Pentecostal Megachurches in Southeast Asia: Negotiating Class, Consumption and the Nation* ingeniously characterizes the megachurch. Chong together with the contributors to this book captured a distinct scholarly gap in understanding the megachurch.

With contributions from eight sociology of religion scholars (hailing from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore), this groundbreaking compilation of works on megachurches in Southeast Asia heavily emphasized the materiality (class, consumption, and the nation) surrounding the topic in question. Although several studies have emphasized<sup>1</sup> the role of material conditions in shaping the megachurch—generally characterized through the use of modernization’s tools like technology, the megachurch has never been tackled through its relationship with something more deeply ingrained in the society at large. Mostly composed of descriptive discussions on megachurches, the present literature stimulated the need for a deeper understanding of the theoretical underpinnings behind the megachurch. It is in this that *Pentecostal Megachurches in Southeast Asia* takes flight from where past works have left off.