

a methodological intervention toward a reflexive gerontology.

Essays that feature abject bodies, bodies that illustrate the intertwining of health and morality, round out the last part of the book. Difficult to disentangle, bodies that are medicalized through obesity and pregnancy are also scrutinized and surveilled in pursuit of the shifting socially normative body. Shirlene Badger's ethnographic research of children and families in a "genetics of obesity" study shows how the child's body becomes a "vector" of moral messages to the general population. Her analysis is a cogent explanation of how deploying a particular child's story, real or fictionalized, performs the cultural work of reasserting the predominance of medical science as the ultimate interlocutor and savior. Ettorre's essay focuses on the pregnant embodiment of drug-using women who are socially designated as doubly disgusting. Using the theoretical concept of the "scopic drive," the socio-cultural force that designates bodies as normal or deviant and makes bodies knowable and intelligible through increasingly invasive biomedical means, she uncovers how social forces operate to create hyper-visual means to lurk around women's outside social practices and peer inside women's bodies.

Adding significantly to sociology of the body and to interdisciplinary body/embodiment studies, Ettorre's collection demonstrates breadth and depth of sociological reflexivity, inspired empiricism, and theoretical dexterity.

When Couples Become Parents: The Creation of Gender in the Transition to Parenthood, by **Bonnie Fox**. Toronto, CAN: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 334pp. \$35.00 paper. ISBN: 9780802091840.

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Becoming a parent is one of the most significant transitions most adults will experience. Individuals' and couples' lives are changed in ways that are often unforeseen and unpredictable. As heterosexual couples adjust to their new roles as mothers and fathers,

many renegotiate the division of household and market labor while they meet the intensive child care demands posed during the first year of their child's life. Individually and as a couple, there is often a radical transformation in outlook, meaning and priorities. However, the challenges and benefits of new parenthood are not equally distributed. Following the birth of a child, most couples become more gender traditional: men tend to work more following the birth of a child, and women less. Historically, women have been assigned the role of primary caregiver and in the early months, those mothers choosing to breastfeed are tied closely to their babies in a way that men are not. How couples adjust to having a new baby varies along several lines: their social class will influence the array of service options they can access, the stressors they face, and the expectations they have of themselves and their partners. The gender division of household work, and the extent to which the couple holds egalitarian ideals, will influence how they hope to divide parenting and may affect how they actually do so.

In *When Couples Become Parents*, Bonnie Fox tackles these issues by following couples from the birth of their first child through the first year of parenthood. She draws upon multiple in-depth interviews with couples in Toronto, Canada to explore the interplay of gender and class dynamics as couples begin their lives as parents. She opens with a chapter on childbirth, goes on to explore how couples are becoming parents, discusses homemaking, and describes the evolution of relationships through the transition to parenthood. The sample consists of 40 couples in which both partners were interviewed over the course of their first year of parenthood.

Fox's findings, though not surprising, offer insight about how couples manage, negotiate and implement their new roles. Throughout the book, Fox interlaces narratives and quotes that illustrate the important roles played by social class, the gender division of household labor before the transition to parenthood, relative bargaining power, socioeconomic status and the important role of access to social support. She does this while considering the perspectives of both men and women so that we gain an

important understanding of early fatherhood in men's lives.

Beginning with the labor and delivery process, Fox explores how women's childbirth experiences are shaped by their prior marital relationships, social support systems, and earnings relative to their husbands. She also explains how childbirth transforms women, and how this transformation affects their parenting as well as their husband's role and relationships within their families. Specifically, she discusses how women who feel their childbirth went well often experienced support and nurturing both from their partner and their medical team. Women who developed their own health challenges during the birthing process faced additional challenges in fulfilling their expectations of the maternal role. Fox spends substantial time detailing the nuances of childbirth and illustrating factors that influence women's outlook, including their sense of empowerment, control and agency. However, the early section of the book does not address how different childbirth and postpartum experiences influenced fathers' transition to parenthood.

In later chapters, we get a fuller understanding of the role of parenthood in men's lives and how it changes them. By including both mothers' and fathers' perspectives, Fox analyzes not only individual transformations, but how these are shaped by the couple's dynamics and the families' wider support network. For example, she describes several families where gender egalitarian parenting may be preferred by the mother, but is not possible due to the father's reluctance to engage in traditionally female responsibilities involved with infant care. This is particularly evident in some of the lower-income families, where the men feel unable to provide adequate financial support for the family and thus do not derive as strong a sense of masculinity from their role as worker and provider. Such men often prefer a more traditional gender division at home to support their masculine identities.

Fox's book offers important insights about the transition to parenthood, providing an important lens on the first year of parenthood and laying the groundwork for future research. Scholars of the family and of gender dynamics would surely be interested in further research that builds on Fox's work

and explores such important questions as: What happened in the couples' and children's lives subsequent to the first year of parenthood? Fox observed substantial changes during the babies' first year of life. It would be valuable for sociologists to explore whether these changes are permanent and whether gender and class influence how the transition to parenthood then shapes later parenting practices and couple dynamics. The field would also benefit from understanding what happens with subsequent births and whether and how the initial transition to parenthood affects later parenting decisions. Additionally, work that addresses a more racially/ethnically diverse sample, and work that addresses the transition to parenthood among same-sex couples would nicely complement this study.

Socialist Insecurity: Pensions and the Politics of Uneven Development in China, by **Mark W. Frazier**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010. 210pp. \$35.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780801448225.

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Socialist Insecurity adeptly combines empirical detail and theoretical insight, single country and comparative analysis, and qualitative and quantitative methods. The book deepens our understanding of state-society relations in contemporary China, and social welfare developments around the globe.

Empirically, Mark Frazier tells a crucial part of China's economic reform story that heretofore has not been comprehensively studied and explained: how, when, and why China's pension system was reformed. Lest anyone question the topic's importance, Frazier reminds us that pensions are the "most expensive function of the Chinese government" (p. 2). Drawing on over forty interviews conducted with government officials, enterprise managers, and common citizens, Frazier recounts the tale of pension reform in a clear way, providing enough detail to satisfy China hands and policy wonks, yet not so much that a more general-interest reader will become lost or bored. The basic storyline