

- (c) While most workers in food delivery or ride hailing are male, other sectors of the gig economy have a stronger female presence, like online crowdwork and domestic labour platforms. These workers sometimes have other demands and aspirations than their male peers. Traditional 9-to-5 employment contracts might, for example, not be a desirable goal for female gig workers with familial care duties. If labour activists or unions wish to expand their base beyond the male workforce, they should reorient their stereotypical assumptions about what gig workers want.
- (d) Gig workers are not passive victims of one-way oppression without escape. They have successfully resisted platform companies both individually and collectively. Individuals often engage in ‘algorithm hacking’ to increase their incomes, while groups have been known to form their own unions or online communities. These forms of direct self-organisation have often formed the basis of collective action and political victories.

In sum, *The Routledge Handbook of the Gig Economy* facilitates a more fine-grained approach to the gig economy than many other introductions. The book is aware of the internal heterogeneity of the sector and its workers, and highlights the internal differences through a mosaic of contributions on diverse subtopics.

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Grandmothering While Black: A Twenty-First Century Story of Love, Coercion, and Survival by LaShawnDa Pittman, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2023, 350 pp, \$29.95 (paperback), ISBN: 9780520389960.

Long before the global pandemic’s onset, care crises and deficits of all sorts have been brewing. But it was not until COVID-19 had swept through nursing homes worldwide to fatal degrees that state officials formally acknowledged that there were missing foundations in social welfare policy. The scholarship on care work spanning formal and informal spaces shows that regardless of its setting, imperial ideological legacies of racialized gendered servitude underpins the dire plight of caregivers whose work is either taken for free or paid with only tokenistic sums. Then again, within

this macrostructural understanding of care's devaluation lie subtler and nuanced inequalities between groups of women who are socially coerced into positions of care service. Such finer lines of differentiation in already unequal transfers of reproductive labor are seldom acknowledged yet are an urgent domain of study as they point to multilayered chains of devaluation.

With these background conditions in mind, empirically and theoretically, like the 2023 Global CareWork Summit (7–9 June 2023, University of Costa Rica) where both authors met, *Grandmothering While Black* is a most apt and timely contribution to relational feminist agendas. The introduction is a concise yet comprehensive overview of grandparent caregiving in the United States, with special attention to discriminative policies that disproportionately target Black women. Chapters 1 and 2 are about (Grand)Mothering while Black, showing the intergenerational connections in the social context of Black family life; the concept of 'anticipatory responsibility' (p. 76) is crucial for grasping Pittman's point about the compounded burdens that grandmothers bear. Chapters 3 and 4 explore the complexity of coerced mothering across formal to informal settings. Chapter 5 is about how grandmothers stay afloat. Chapters 6 and 7 take on distinctly more personal tones and discuss emotional lives, such as losing a part of themselves to childcare, and the overall very grave circumstances of older Black women. Pittman's careful embedding of the theme of coercion in acts of love throughout its many thoughtfully laid out chapters is outstanding for too many reasons to state, but key among them are (1) the extent, scope, and choice of data presentation; (2) the deliberate use of a grounded storytelling approach; (3) its implied revisions to the state of comparative welfare regime analysis, which is imprisoned in a nation-state unit of analysis; and (4) the novel theoretical breakthroughs that all of these reasons signal to intersectionality thinking in feminist theory. This book promises to enrich the intellectual ideas of social researchers in care work analyses, defined broadly, who are looking for ways to approach their interviewees' words with care and nuance.

Starting from this last point, where *Grandmothering While Black's* largest contribution lies in the review author's view, Pittman begins with the intergenerational nature of mothering for the African American women she encounters. These embody not just intersecting systems of 'racial, gender, and economic inequality' but also 'the unique cultural and structural forces that shape Black families' (p. 4), which are often those banal details of everyday socialization that are often not fleshed out when people wrestle with suffocating neoliberal policy demands. In Chapters 3 and 4, where the focus is more squarely on the bargaining and negotiating strategies of Black grandmothers navigating the punitive child welfare system, there is an unmistakable weaving together of the institutional and ideological without losing sight of the women's creative agency as political actors. This holistic roundabout way of discussing structural oppression and personal resistance allows readers to recognize its complex relationships without reifying a structure/agency binary, since the family dynamics at stake are themselves irreducibly diverse, and affect how grandmothers decide whether, how, and to what extent they will involve themselves in childcare. Although Pittman identifies the grandparent caregiving literature as the main audience, intersectionality scholars invested in care work across the broader umbrella of feminist political economy will find much inspiration in the way grandmothers' stories traverse the analytical boundaries of macro, meso, and micro scales, such that what it means to care for grandchildren may entail pursuing contradictory care ethics and goals at once.

On a related note, Pittman has an extraordinarily user-friendly design to data presentation that allows both qualitative and quantitatively inclined readers to grasp the key tenets of the child welfare system. One appreciates how every other chapter features a few substantial voices that speak to its key themes and the institutional barriers that threaten family relationships, which is then followed by a concise policy table that contextualizes their emotional lives. These socially and culturally situated accounts of coerced care by uniquely positioned caregivers (Black

grandmothers) then also invites a rethinking of how comparative social welfare state analysis is usually done, that is, assuming a nation-state-centered horizon. Pittman's emphasis of structure (policy) does not come at the expense of appreciating the vastness of internal (domestic) differentiations among differently racialized and gendered peoples, for what the narratives collectively show is that the United States is far from one case study, which is often how analytical itineraries in comparative politics go.

That said, there are areas where *Grandmothering While Black* can be put into conversation with similar empirical studies in alternative and/or other cultural contexts of welfare states where racialized gendered servitude takes on different localized styles, such as in post-war Asian developmental states or in other large countries like China and India, which have their own unacknowledged patterns of internal domestic worker migration. Because its lived experiences and structural conditions of care occur in the United States, there is a (rightfully so) heavy reliance on the combination and intersections of gender and race identity as Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2010), in *Forced to Care* 13 years ago, had laid out (p. 121). While the author has followed a contextually fitting framework and built on it in her own ways by detailing the myriad ways in which ageism and sexism compounds the coerced caring of Black (grand)mothers across generations, which is also interpellated by the local policy context of legal rights and parenthood, the broader transnational care work literature would be keen to explore how these frameworks metamorphose and mutate—in other words, 'travel'—across geographical and geopolitical contexts. In some circumstances of coerced care where not just older women but the in-house hire of migrant domestics is normalized, for instance, localized configurations of othering beyond gender and race identity, which have a certain hegemonic import in the Anglophone English-speaking scholarship, require their own expositions. Consequently, the topic of ambivalence and dilemmas in versions and visions of care, which often arises in a migrant world of care where its content and substance can be so different as to look unrecognizable, is a noteworthy research agenda that can complement this book's rich illustrations.

In the aforementioned sense, relational comparisons of racialized caregivers, and how caring for others and self is risky, paves the way for frameworks of intersectionality that trespass the 'popular' triangle of gender, race, and class. This is not a critique or shortcoming of the book but rather an invitation to caregiving studies, not just its subset of grandparent caregiving, to embrace detailed case analysis and within-nation-state factors that can only be gleaned from ethnographic encounters, which might otherwise get lost in more abstract methodological styles. Just as importantly, as the author's excellently crafted sequence of stories show, human beings are contradictory animals. Black grandmothers may face intensified coercion from common structural impediments, but their actions, decision-making, and painful choices they come to are chaotic, incoherent, and diverse. In this book, the idea of 'generational needs' (p. 77) is identified as rather unique to the socialization of Black family life, which has parallels in other locations where care is not seen as an individual project. In another example, the author alludes to differences between white and non-white feminisms (sometimes collapsed into Global North and South feminisms) by using 'personal' factors instead of 'gender' in status obligations (p. 2). These only show that the modes of relationality in people's caregiving praxis go beyond identity categories like 'gender' and 'race'; such conversations would further benefit from open-ended journeys of intersectionality, which this book embarks on, including ones that consider the possibility of its muted relevance.

One word of caution might be raised for Chapter 6: 'Managing the Burden and the Blessing', where Pittman offers an impressive array of grandmothers drawing on 'social support' networks and 'religious/spiritual beliefs' (p. 220) to cope with negative mental health effects. While the key argument that emotional lives matter is necessary, there is a risk of romanticizing resilience and strength that is often done in justifications of women's familial responsibility. Pittman's depth of

storied narration clearly does not intend this, and the book will benefit from dialogue with frameworks of gendered resilience. Readers might also find the empirical data somewhat dated given that these 74 interviews with Black grandparents occurred during 2007–2011 in Illinois, Chicago’s South Side. No doubt circumstances since then have changed, not least to say with recurrent epidemics, pandemics, and economic recessions that have exacerbated these existing inequalities. Finally, one might have been curious about what ‘emotional overload’ (p. 233) looked and felt like to Pittman during those encounters, as the relational dynamics of interviews implicate all parties and shape the way interactions pan out. Yet overall, readers will appreciate the depth of nuance and multiple sides to each story that Pittman takes care of for every person she features, which is a labor of love that takes time.

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Social Security in the Balkans – Volume 1. An Overview of Social Policy in Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria by Marzena Żakowska and Dorota Domalewska (eds), Leiden, Netherlands: BRILL, 2021, 244 pp, US\$ 27.92. ISBN: 9789004466579

The book series entitled ‘Studies in Critical Social Science Volume 192’ – ‘Social Security in the Balkans Volume 1’. The Balkans region consists of several southeastern European countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. Each country in the Balkans has its social security system, and while there may be some similarities in certain aspects, there are also significant differences in eligibility criteria, benefits and administration. In this book, an overview of Social Policy in Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria is carried out in eight chapters divided into three sections. The first part is dedicated to Social Security: Overview of Reforms and Challenges, the second part to Pension System: Scheme and Development and the third section to Social Security Evolution and Economic Recession.

The first chapter in the first section relates to Croatia’s experienced significant structural changes and legislative reforms to pursue sustainable economic development while contending with issues related to an ageing population, the pressures of globalisation and pervasive technological advancement. It delves into Croatia’s endeavour to implement a comprehensive employment policy and social inclusion in the face of multiple demands and constant developments. It highlights the difficulties and evaluates the results of reforms in housing, health care, social security and welfare, employment and education, and discusses ways in which their social security system can be improved.

The next chapter discusses the dissolution of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the post-conflict (1992–1995) creation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It highlights the numerous social issues that emerged due to this terrible conflict. The transitional difficulties and the effects of neoliberal policies. In doing this, the chapter explores the social security-related issues within the larger social security conceptual framework and their implications for the present security risks, difficulties and threats Bosnia and Herzegovina faces. The chapter brings to us society’s economic and social realm, including depopulation, poverty and social exclusion, unemployment, migration, vulnerable socioeconomic groups, and the concerns of Islamists