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...a must read for anyone dissatisfied with the stereotypes that depict transnational marriages as little more than sex trafficking...

Mary Beth Mills, Colby College, USA, author of Thai Women in the Global Labor Force

Love, Money and Obligation Transnational Marriage in a Northeastern Thai Village

By Patcharin Lapanun, Khon Kaen University

Globalization means transnational marriages and intimacies become increasingly viable options for women and men. Patcharin Lapanun explores the marriages of Thai women with *farang* men, and complicates conventional views about materiality and intimacy in these settings. The sentiments and life stories of women and men engaging in these transnational relationships highlight the complexities of the associations that are shape and reshaped by love, money and gender obligations on the one hand and the dynamics of socio-cultural and historical contexts on the other.

Transnational marriages challenge gender relations, perceptions of sexuality, marriage and family as well as existing class divisions in rural Thai communities. Working in depth in one particular community in Northeast Thailand, and so focusing on the "local end" of these transnational connections, Lapanun sees these families as comprising a new social class, as determined by their distinctive consumption patterns and life styles. They challenge village hierarchical structure, and put village elites in a vulnerable position. Her indepth examination highlights the importance of women's agency and the strength and creativity of people seeking to forge meaning-ful lives in the processes of social transition and in the face of local and global encounters.

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