

### **ADVENTURE CAPITAL: Migration and the Making of an African Hub in Paris**

Julie Kleinman. 2019. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. 224 pages. ISBN 9780520304406 (hardback); ISBN 9780520304413 (paperback).

*Adventure Capital* takes us into the social environment of Paris's Gare du Nord railway station to show how West African migrants fashion lives and identities around adventure and mobility. Focusing on what these "adventurers" term the "Gare du Nord method"—defined as "a set of practices and an overall moral orientation . . . through which they seek to create value through social relations" (6)—Julie Kleinman offers an alternative to the wider French political discourse around "integration" that presents settlement and citizenship as the final objective. Kleinman's clear and engaging writing style takes the reader on a journey into the changing lives of these adventurers as they seek dignity, happiness, symbolic status, and economic opportunities through their use of the station's infrastructure and public spaces.

As a major international transit hub, adventurers were drawn to the Gare du Nord as a site where they could meet new people and forge social ties that might lead them to work, romantic relationships, or alternative pathways to adulthood. However, their presence and failure to observe civil inattention was linked to wider racialized depictions of the Gare du Nord as dangerous, making them

targets for increased policing, particularly following a 2007 "riot" against police brutality at the station. While encounters with police could be dangerous and humiliating, Kleinman shows how her interlocutors tried to confound police surveillance and used storytelling to transform their experiences with racial profiling, identity checks, and body searches into "important moments for enacting their adventurer personhood" (75).

The book is structured around five core chapters, along with an introduction and conclusion. The first two chapters introduce readers to the Gare du Nord and its history as a site of segregation and containment aimed at separating the "dangerous classes" from upper-class passengers. Kleinman skillfully draws connections between the historic repression of the rural poor and colonial laborers and the contemporary policing of the station to show how it continues to be governed by an imperial logic of racial containment. Following a redesign of the Gare du Nord in the early 2000s, which sought to convert the transport hub into an open and democratic site for "social exchange," these strategies of suppression remained, with suburban commuters relegated to the lower levels and international travelers occupying the upper floors. While the 2007 rebellion looms large in the background of Kleinman's early fieldwork, she contends that the uprising should be understood as a "referendum on the success—not the failure" (56) of planners to make the station more than an apolitical site for transit. Instead, she argues that while



marginalized users like the West African adventurers were overlooked in the station's redesign, it is their appropriation of the station's public spaces that most fully realizes the planners' original desire to create a "social hub."

The final three chapters of the book give us ethnographic insight into the "Gare du Nord method," showing how adventurers use their skills of imitation, observation, and maneuvering—all of which they associate with growing up *au bled* (in the countryside)—to assert dominance and generate symbolic capital among their peers. Kleinman describes how the men use clothing to signal legal status and evade police scrutiny and learn to interact with European women by mimicking the behavior of French men. We are given rich detail on the individual lives of interlocutors over a longer period, and Kleinman explores how these adventurers' relationship to the Gare du Nord changes as they form relationships with white women, move between illegal activity and legitimate employment, and secure residency papers. However, these practices illustrate not only an alternative strategy of integration, but also an alternative route to adulthood and authority for those migrants faced with uncertain legal status and precarious living and working conditions.

While connections between the adventurers' appropriation of the Gare du Nord and their precarious employment and housing situations are mentioned repeatedly, the book does lack closer detail on their living and working conditions outside the station. But then again, that is not the focus of *Adventure Capital* nor the preoccupation of Kleinman's interlocutors, who are future-oriented and focused on changing their social and economic status. Instead, Kleinman demonstrates how adventurers have sought the "aesthetic experience of mobility" (99) offered by the Gare du Nord in order to break away from traditional kin and migration networks and assert prestige and skill in the face of demoralizing working conditions. Overall, *Adventure Capital* is an example of ethnography at

its strongest, treating readers to an alternative story of undocumented lives and place-making. As such, the book will be of interest for both urban anthropologists and migration scholars seeking to understand the relationship between migration and the formation of contemporary urban public space.

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### PAPER TRAILS: Migrants, Documents, and Legal Insecurity

Sarah B. Horton and Josiah Heyman, eds. 2020. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 264 pages. ISBN 9781478008453 (paperback).

Among the most powerful contemporary paradoxes is this: while states increasingly dilute questions of binding membership and reliable provision of care and inclusion, documents indicating belonging to the state gain crucial importance. For migrants and noncitizens, this nexus between the role of documents and the resulting processes of legal distinction and incorporation is particularly strong, and although temporary and provisional statuses proliferate, the state is a constant presence in the daily lives of most migrants. This refers not only to the frequent validation and verification of documents, but also to the myriad complementary papers that promise or grant entitlements on subnational levels. That is, landlords, teachers, medical personnel, real estate agents, bank tellers, and city councils regularize access and membership through their own paperwork, generating alternative and compensatory modes of provision and security that are intertwined with legibility and surveillance. *Paper Trails*, a volume edited by Sarah Horton and Josiah Heyman, considers these issues with new theoretical insights and empirical scrutiny. It not only brings together eight outstanding scholars in the interdisciplinary field of migration studies,

but does so in a particularly well-structured manner, increasing its user-friendliness. The knowledgeable, well-crafted introduction by Sarah Horton concentrates on the state of the art and the research desiderata, and Josiah Heyman's conclusion weaves the contributions together using the notion of power. The book's effectiveness is amplified by the three short interim chapters that conceptually frame the subsequent sections.

Every scholar working on migration, citizenship, politics, or bureaucracy should consult this extremely accessible, insightful, and inspiring book. I have space here to refer only to a few highlights. The first part of the volume, "Foundations: Controlling Space and Time," explores processes of documentation as the key fundament of the modern nation state, which entails not only a spatial dimension, through the control of territorial borders, but also a temporal one. For instance, in tracing shifts in immigration statuses over time in the UK, Bridget Anderson manages to pinpoint the arbitrary nature of these taken-for-granted categories and the time-testing of citizenship regimes. The chapter by Doris Provine and Monica Varsanyi concentrates on driver's licenses, which represent a "soft" but extremely powerful identifying tool that not only provides access to mobility and employability, but also makes the license-holder visible and controllable. In comparing historical changes to driver's license rules for unauthorized immigrants in Arizona and New Mexico, the authors problematize the federal state's liberty to arbitrarily set juridical standards.

Part II, "Documents as Security, Documents as Visibility," continues to explore the double-edged nature of documents that promise legitimacy while also increasing legibility. Deborah Boehm considers the importance of paperwork from the perspective of undoing membership, arguing that the state uses the verification of the documents of so-called undocumented migrants to produce their unauthorization and eventually process

their deportation. The following chapter, by Susan Bibler Coutin, addresses the technocratic expertise of intermediaries within these often-arbitrary regularization processes and speaks to the legal uncertainty and emotional burden that is not always solved and can even be increased by paperwork. The next chapter, by Cecilia Menjivar, shifts consideration to the role of private-sector actors who request documentation from their clients, contributing to the reification of the state's presence in immigrants' everyday lives.

Part III, "Resistance and Refusals," delivers surprising accounts of how immigrants manage to creatively subvert or resist state power by reusing, redefining, and redirecting documents. For example, Colombian Kitchwa migrants take advantage of the inscrutability of their Indigenous appearance and the fact that state authorities are unable to distinguish one from the other. Juan Thomas Ordóñez's insights make clear that the meaning of documents changes in different contexts, something that also applies to the question of whether documents matter in other national contexts. Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz, comparing the power of papers between Mexico and the US, demonstrates that the recognition or acceptance achieved in one state can be erased by another state. Thus, deported migrants have to navigate between two different national contexts by behaving and interacting differently through their personal paperwork.

In its empirical diversity concerning "bureaucratic inscriptions," this impressive book offers numerous reference points for future research. Ideally, such future investigations would process comparative perspectives beyond the US context and address not only South–North migration, but also other directionalities, alongside interrupted, redirected, and multidirectional migration routes, which complicate the paper trails that cross different and often contrasting migration regimes.

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## ARC OF THE JOURNEYMAN: Afghan Migrants in England

Nichola Khan. 2020. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 288 pages. ISBN 9781517909628 (hardback).

Reviewing Nichola Khan's 2020 monograph *Arc of the Journeyman: Afghan Migrants in England* is a challenging endeavor. The book is as dense and complex as the stories of its protagonists and the historical and political legacies in which these stories are embedded. Like the lives of Pashtun journeymen taxi drivers, Khan's ethnography is multi-sited. Her enquiry moves back and forth between England, Afghanistan, and Pakistan over a period of eight years and insights are grounded in long-standing acquaintances and friendships. This adds an appealing touch of human warmth to the ethnographic sections of the book without compromising analytical rigor. The long period of time that Khan spent in her various field sites and the trust and reciprocity-based relationships she developed with her interlocutors allow her to offer readers deep insights into intimate dimensions of migrant lives. These lives are shaped by an often precarious here and now in the UK, transnational friendships and kinship relations, the interplay of people's past and future, and the global migration apparatus.

One important anchor of Khan's ethnography is Zmarai, a Kabul-born man in his late 40s who experienced different phases of war, violence, separation, and internal displacement in Afghanistan. Together with his family, Zmarai fled to Pakistan in the 1990s and moved on to the UK sometime later, where he has been working as a taxi driver in Brighton. Khan builds on Zmarai's life and his experiences in her deep ethnographic enquiry, encompassing theoretical reflections and elaborations. At the same time, Zmarai exemplifies the trajectory and the multilevel, transnational struggles of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees who have arrived and to some extent settled in Europe over the

last two decades. Based on the experiences of Zmarai and other Pashtun interlocutors whose lives have unfolded in a similar way, Khan uncovers "the dual forces of energy and stasis, mania and depression, life and death [and how] madness is shaped by individual resources and limits, the possibilities of the environment to provide and nourish and the dual opportunities and impossibilities produced in migrant life under neoliberal work regimes" (231). The stories of Pashtun journeymen taxi drivers also highlight the traces of war, global inequality, and injustice in the lives of individuals who are compelled to be mobile in various ways.

Khan's book revolves around a specific group of Afghan migrants in a specific English setting, namely Pashtun taxi drivers who live in a coastal city in southern England. Khan uses the terms "Pashtun taxi drivers," "Pashtun migrants," and "Afghan migrants" interchangeably. This is confusing and blurs the actual scope of the book. Without wanting to diminish Khan's findings, it seems necessary to underline that there is a lot more to say about Afghan migration and the Afghan population in the UK. It would have been helpful if the specificities of this particular Afghan research population had been spelled out more clearly. Theoretically, on the other hand, this book is very eclectic. When reading, one sometimes gets the impression that Khan employs established theory to make her ethnographic account more intelligible to readers who are less familiar with the history and present of Afghan migration. However, by drawing on a wealth of different theoretical approaches, Khan risks remaining unspecific in her theoretical elaboration.

Throughout the book Khan works with fragments and fragmentation, which she uses as both structuring and interpretive tools. The monograph is deliberately not organized in a linear way, which—again—reflects the disrupted and often intercepted trajectories of its protagonists. Starting with the analysis of mobility as a continuing element in the lives

of Pashtun taxi drivers in Brighton, Khan shifts the focus to Pakistan, where she combines theorizations of mobility, liminality, and commensality to analyze the picnic trips—*chakars*—that her interlocutors undertake upon return. Her comprehensive and captivating account of *chakars* fulfills Khan's promise to integrate ideas of freedom and suffering in original ways. Subsequently, we return to Sussex. Based on the story of Zmarai, readers are drawn into a thoroughgoing account of the interplay between mobility, immobility, deep depression, sleep, and dreams, which shapes experiences of exile. Much of Zmarai's everyday life is marked by grief, hopelessness, and continuous falling short. He keeps moving without ever arriving.

In addition to fragmentation and disruptions as structuring elements in the lives of Afghan taxi drivers, Khan also employs them as stylistic tools when presenting a “fragmentography” of everyday lives. Remaining in the British context, Khan dedicates the penultimate section of her book to the dynamics of mobilization, collective organization, and contention among Pashtuns in Sussex. What makes this subject of analysis particularly noteworthy is that collective organization follows its own rules, without engaging with state-led programs for integrating Muslim migrants. The book ends with reflections on the meanings of being “Afghan, Pashtun, Muslim, and a migrant in the contemporary world” (55). It situates the protagonists, as well as Afghan migrants more broadly, in a context of contemporary war, imperial ruins, and postimperial everyday settings.

Khan's account of the Pashtun journeymen is a captivating read and certainly the most thoroughgoing ethnography of the entangled lives of Afghan migrants in Europe that has yet been published. She powerfully exposes the complexity of asylum “as no experience of safety and freedom, but rather a carceral burden of familial obligation, political and legal constraint, the inability to fit in or forget – and enduring struggles that, after years living in Britain, still enrich a rich inner

archive of dreams, fears and anxieties” (13). Given Khan's research population, the predominant focus of this ethnography is on men, and their experiences and practices. Women are largely absent from narrations and analyses, but occasionally appear in subordinate roles. While this gender bias is not problematic as such, it is striking that there is no critical, crosscutting engagement with gender, gender relations, and masculinity more specifically.

*Arc of the Journeyman* appeared shortly before Afghanistan saw another incisive transformation with the return of Taliban rule in late summer 2021. These recent events are likely to affect both migration out of the country and the political responses of the migration apparatus. The book constitutes a valuable basis for continuing engagements with the tensions between mobility and stasis in the experiences of Afghan migrants in or on their way to Europe.

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### **EU MIGRATION AGENCIES: The Operation and Cooperation of FRONTEX, EASO, and EUROPOL**

David Fernández-Rojo. 2021. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. 272 pages. ISBN 9781839109331.

The publication of David Fernández-Rojo's book is very timely, as it offers an excellent review of the emergence of EU migration agencies with a special focus on the influence and aftermath of the so-called 2015–2016 refugee crisis. As we are on the verge of a reform of the EU's migration policy, the volume also sheds some light on the shortcomings of the current institutional approach and the limitations of the legal foundations on which the agencies were built, especially when evaluated vis-à-vis the practice on the ground and tasks and operations conducted by agencies'

representatives at the EU borders, in hotspots in particular. This broad picture encourages the reader to ask several questions about the current and future position of migration agencies in the EU.

The author presents the process of agencification of EU migration policy through the broadening the scope of the agencies' prerogatives. This came as a normal reformatory process and development of these institutions, but also as a response to the "refugee crisis," when all agencies decided to step in and offer their assistance to southern EU countries. This move was made to fulfill the expectations of the European Commission and all member states. However, in this way, the agencies strengthened their position within the EU and positioned themselves as an essential partner whose presence was necessary to prevent a similar situation in the future. This gave the EC an opportunity to table the reform of Frontex and EASO, which had previously been blocked by member states reluctant to further restrict their sovereign power and transfer yet another piece of it to the European level. At the same time, the agencies took upon themselves new tasks and obligations on the ground and at the border (tasks and obligations that were not bestowed in regulations authorizing their possible operations) and proved themselves indispensable in performing them; in doing so, they *de facto* expanded their own authority. It is highly unlikely that they will be deprived of any newly gained competences in the future, and the forthcoming legal provisions will rather rubber-stamp what has already been achieved in practice.

Fernández-Rojo analyzes two obvious migration agencies: Frontex (and its successor, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency) and the European Asylum Support Office (and provisions for its upcoming conversion into the EU Agency for Asylum). Compellingly, he also adds Europol to this picture—an agency that seems at first glance not to be in charge of migration management, but is in fact quite involved in investigating

migratory processes. Thus, including Europol in the research agenda of this book makes the picture of the agencification process much more complete. The book presents the historical, legal, and political processes by which each of the agencies was established and their development over the years. While this backdrop is certainly necessary, the most interesting parts of this monograph are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 offers an insight into interagency cooperation and its most interesting element, which is the agencies' presence in hotspots since 2015 and their division of competences and tasks on the ground. In practice, not only did the agencies divide tasks among themselves, but in light of the crisis situation and the weak preparation of Italy and especially Greece to handle the influx of asylum seekers, they took over some responsibilities (which until then had been restricted to the sole domain of those states and their competent national authorities). The problem of the (non)existence of legal foundations in the hotspots themselves is an additional and interesting issue tackled in the book.

The growing number of competences of EU migration agencies leads to another very important element—the lack of accountability and oversight of their performance, especially when it comes to the protection of the fundamental rights of any person subjected to any operation carried out by officers of these agencies. This is studied in Chapter 5, and all agencies are either lacking this element, or it is particularly weak. While Fernández-Rojo focuses in his book mostly on legal aspects and other official documents, highlighting significant shortcomings in this respect, it would be great to probe further, to more practical and more critical aspects of this phenomenon. Investigation of such aspects is offered by Katja Franko (2020) in her recent book, perfectly complementing Fernández-Rojo's findings (even though she restricts her analysis to Frontex only) and going even further. She underlines that Frontex has already positioned itself as a crime

control and security agency that, among other transgressions, turns a blind eye to deaths on the Mediterranean Sea (and is responsible for designing its own operation in a way that disregards migrants' lives). The recent scandal over pushbacks performed by Frontex officers in Greece, which was exposed in late 2020 and never addressed by Frontex authorities, is yet another illustration of the problems the organization has with monitoring its own activities. All of the above proves beyond any doubt the absence of humane and human rights approaches in Frontex's organizational culture.

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## Queer Migration and Asylum in Europe

ed. Richard C. M. Mole. 2021. London: UCL Press. 262 pages. ISBN 9781787355811.

Migration is a very hot topic in current media discussions in Europe, acting as a proxy for a variety of grievances that politicians trigger through reference to incoming "flows" of people. Although in some countries, such discussions may take very ugly forms—the never-ending campaign around "Brexit" is a case in point—more or less subtle circulation of biased and politically charged messages is prevalent elsewhere. In these discussions, little attention is given to nuances and details of the various forms that migration takes. This is why an evidence-based and academically weighed conversation about migration is so important. *Queer Migration and Asylum in Europe* is good reading for this purpose. It is a collection of many case studies, all dedicated

to one question: how do mobile subjects' sexualities relate to their mobility? Thus, the book offers an exhaustive overview of social, legal, ethnographic, and geographical pieces of research about LGBT people's experiences of mobility, and institutional limitations to the same.

The book opens with a conceptualization of the collection's main terms, such as "queer" and "queer migration." Even though not all authors use these concepts or accept them, editor Richard Mole's insight helps to situate the following ten case studies very well. His conceptualization uncovers the book's major tension: "Even if they do not migrate specifically to escape persecution, LGBT migrants often discover that Europe is not as welcoming as they were led to believe and they find themselves marginalised, both as ethnic minorities in the destination society and as sexual minorities within the diaspora community" (2). Welcoming at the level of rhetoric, Europe continues to be defensive when it comes to reviewing cases of actual asylum seekers persecuted for their sexuality in their home countries. Both legal and social mechanisms condition the various forms of exclusion, powerlessness, and disenfranchisement of those queer migrants whose hopes crash against the walls of the Fortress Europe. Evgeny Shtorn's (2020) recent autoethnographic book *Refugee Chronicles*, published in Russian, about his experience of staying in the Irish system of direct provision for asylum seekers after fleeing from persecution back home, is good evidence that current arrangements for reviewing asylum claims can retraumatize those already suffering traumatic experiences. Further case studies presented in *Queer Migration and Asylum in Europe* from the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and other places add to this discussion.

Another dimension of this collection is a thorough review of current legislation in the sphere of migration and asylum-seeking processes on various levels. The book mostly focuses on the European Court of Human Rights, European law more generally, and the

law of some specific states in Europe. Two different aspects are especially important for the book's authors in this respect. One is the overall framework of regulation of both migration generally, and specifically seeking asylum based on persecution for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This field of law seems to operate on ambiguities, partial recognition, and uncertainties (Kubal 2013) to simultaneously allow restrictions of migration and maintenance of "gay-friendly" appearances. The second aspect is scrutiny of the mismatch between rigid legal categories and actually lived experiences of people. In *Queer Migration and Asylum in Europe*, authors offer an analysis of Western expectations regarding the "correct" ways to be gay or lesbian, as well as the erasure of bisexual experiences as unintelligible within the categorical apparatus of asylum law. This rigidity of law results in a failure to recognize experiences that do not fit the preconceptions of the Western sexual imagination as falling outside of the scope of asylum legislation.

I think that the advantage of this book is not only in its precise focus or comprehensive case studies. From my point of view, the book achieves more than just bringing together a range of chapters under one cover. What it does is bring together a wide range of perspectives as well. *Queer Migration and Asylum in Europe* is written by scholars who have clear political standpoints, by activists, and by practicing lawyers. The authors of the volume's different chapters have their own relationships with both sexuality and migration: they matter for them as parts of their experience and of the compassionate jobs that they do. In my own research on migration, I have suggested regarding such a unity of different, sometimes incompatible, perspectives as a "queer coalition" (Kondakov 2017). The queer coalition is a notion that allows us to communicate a sort of unity unimaginable in "normal" circumstances. It is an assemblage that eventually creates that which we term migration or—more specifically—queer migration and asylum in Europe.

This book is an academic enterprise, but among its authors are activists and practitioners, and therefore the chapters' styles are accessible for different audiences. The exhaustive overviews of the European Court of Human Rights case law on sexuality and asylum may help judges to be better prepared to adjudicate relevant conflicts. Ethnographic experiences of migration and queer diaspora relationships in various countries around Europe may help activists to address the issues most pressing for the people they try to help. Above all, the book will certainly drive scholarly discussions further.

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#### FINDING WAYS THROUGH EUROSPACE: West African Movers Re-Viewing Europe from the Inside

Joris Schapendonk. 2020. New York: Berghahn. 230 pages. ISBN 9781789206807 (hardback).

*Finding Ways through Eurospace* is an ethnography of West African migrants' mobility pathways in and en route to Europe. It masterfully depicts the relationships, hopes, pressures, strategies, and bureaucratic balancing acts propelling the journeys of people whose freedom of movement is greatly restricted. It shows that despite the European Union's attempts to fence itself off from "unruly"

migrant mobilities, people find creative ways to sneak around ever-tighter border restrictions to travel, explore, and build livelihoods in Europe. By following the dizzyingly complex web of movements of a group of West African men and women, the book convincingly argues that cosmopolitan imaginaries are not reserved for the selected few. They drive the journeys of economically deprived people from African countries as much as the mobile lifestyles of wealthy Europeans. While the latter might have passports that enable them to roam the world carelessly, the former use their creativity and improvisation skills to navigate exclusionary sociopolitical terrains. By connecting different places within and beyond Europe, the African migrants depicted in the book do not just subvert nativist imaginaries. They redefine the very idea of Europe. Rather than engaging with it as a political entity divided by separate national territories, the individuals portrayed treat Europe as a postnational space—a “Eurospace,” where national boundaries, sensibilities, and belongings do not matter.

Despite its focus on West African migrants, the author emphasizes time and again that this is not a book about migration. While it touches on key themes of contemporary migration studies, including transnationalism, refugee and border policies, asylum bureaucracy, place-making, and belonging, it aims to shift the field’s conceptual boundaries. Inspired by the call to “de-migrantize migration studies” (Dahinden 2016), Schapendonk refuses to use migration as the dominant prism through which to analyze his informants’ lives and experiences. Such an angle, he argues, risks essentializing their experiences by locking them into a migrant box from which it becomes impossible for them to ever escape. Instead of treating his interlocutors as bearers of migratory otherness, the author looks at them as highly agentive “movers” and the bearers of a new kind of Europeaness—as mobility experts who continuously transcend norms, rules, and expectations of what Europe or being

European means. In my opinion this is the book’s most important innovation. By developing a “trajectory approach” that follows and ethnographically captures the im/mobility pathways of West African individuals as they travel between European countries, it offers deep insights into their lifeworlds without ever reducing the complexity of lived experiences to one single analytical category (such as “migration” or “asylum”). The people portrayed in this book are more than migrants. They are multidimensional, affective, and creative human beings who have learned to navigate a world that is increasingly marked by inward-looking ideas and practices.

Owing to the trajectory approach, the book offers a mosaic of stories about the protagonists’ crisscrossing movements through Europe and Africa. There is no focus on particular individuals or places. The ethnographic stories unfold in the asylum seekers’ shelters, shared accommodations, and cafes or bars in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, or Greece to which the trajectory approach has taken Schapendonk. Some of the book’s characters only appear intermittently—in short but powerful vignettes—as the author catches them in between journeys. Others reappear in different places and life stages, allowing for a deeper engagement with their struggles and experiences. The scattered ethnographic writing style resulting from the trajectory approach might not always be as easy to follow as more conventional ethnographic accounts, but I believe that it fulfills a crucial task. Schapendonk does not impose linearity onto experiences that are not linear, but forces the reader to take notice of his interlocutors’ dynamic, messy, and fragmented realities.

The book is divided into two parts. While Part I zooms in on West African movers’ navigations—the sociocultural practices they deploy to find their ways—the second part discusses how they locate themselves within Eurospace and engage with their position at the margins of European societies. Taken together, the chapters create a captivating ethnographic picture of a remarkably persistent sense of

cosmopolitanism that keeps propelling West African people's journeys to Europe, even if many of them end in enforced returns and are marked by a high degree of uncertainty.

Unsurprisingly, Schapendonk's boldness in terms of writing style and methodological and conceptual innovation provokes many questions. I admire his attempt to rethink the mobility pathways of people from Africa beyond essentializing and often simplistic migratory categories, but the book does not always succeed in escaping the very limitations it sets out to unsettle. While the author rightly critiques social scientists for treating the migrant as an exceptional, non-ordinary figure, the empirical focus remains on the same categories of mobile people and the same sociocultural phenomena that migration and mobilities scholars have studied for a long time. Introducing new terms such as "movers" to describe the groups in question does not necessarily result in an entirely new conceptual grammar. It proves how difficult it is for mobility scholars to truly overcome historically engrained ways of thinking and writing about non-European mobilities. However, this is just a minor objection I have to an overall beautifully written, thought-provoking book.

*Finding Ways through Eurospace* will be of interest to migration and mobilities scholars across the humanities and social sciences. The author's ability to turn ethnographic findings into compelling stories also makes the book accessible to nonacademic readerships. Despite—or perhaps because of—its efforts to set itself off from conventional migration studies, it is a crucial contribution to migration and mobilities research.

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## **ILLEGAL: How America's Lawless Immigration Regime Threatens Us All**

Elizabeth F. Cohen. 2020. New York: Basic Books. 272 pages. ISBN-13 9781541699847 (hardback).

The criticism of the work of Border Patrol in the USA reached its critical point in 2018 when the newly elected president—Donald J. Trump—officially adopted a "zero tolerance" approach toward migrants, legitimizing the family separation policy. Under this policy, migrant children and their parents who entered the country through illegal channels were separated, and although a few months later President Trump abrogated the policy as a result of a huge wave of criticism, thousands of migrants remain separated to this day (Los Angeles Times 2020). In *Illegal*, Elizabeth A. Cohen looks at the prolonged process of migration policy formation. By examining the establishment and work of organs responsible for migration control in retrospect, the author conveys the logical conclusion that over the course of time, America's immigration regime has been formed by nativist, sexist, and racist Americans for "secure" and white America, and that it poses a great danger to law and order in the country. Cohen's book has seven chapters, but could be logically divided into two parts: first the introduction and conclusion to the current situation, and second the history of immigration enforcement agencies, such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The introduction to the present circumstances is captured in the book's introduction and Chapters 1 and 2. Cohen vividly illustrates the current immigration crisis in America, but in her view, the crisis comes not from an inability to control immigration, but instead from regular physical and emotional abuse of migrants by workers at immigration agencies, infringement of citizens' rights, and preconceived opinions of all migrants as criminals. After briefly narrating her own past

as a Jewish immigrant, Cohen thoroughly describes how enforcement [has] gone rogue. To begin with, US–Mexico border control reminds one more of authoritarianism, with “checkpoints, fortification, heavily armed police, and constant surveillance” (7). Similarly, at the border with Canada, CBP continues surveillance even after border crossings, fundamentally breaching the civil liberties of its own citizens. Beyond military-like border security, some people in the government and the general public are convinced that illegal migrants pose a danger to the host community. However, there is empirical evidence that migrants, documented or not, commit fewer crimes than natives, do not take natives’ jobs, and do not overburden social services. Cohen emphasizes how the budget of enforcement agencies is expanding with the increase of personnel, but the treatment of and attitudes toward migrants are deteriorating. The book presents chilling examples of human rights violations. In Chapter 2, Cohen narrates how crimes committed by the agencies’ personnel go unpunished and “the culture of impunity” flourishes in immigration enforcement. While CBP exploits the lack of constitutional restrictions, ICE is not even obliged to follow due process rules (46). According to the author, CBP uses excessive powers not only on migrants, but also on residents and citizens of the state.

In Chapters 3 to 7, the book examines how migration enforcement mechanisms have been formed in America. In the first part of Chapter 3, Cohen explains how the notion of migrant illegality was invented by elite lobbying organizations and interest groups. Before 1924, immigration was fairly loose, but in that year the government banned most immigration (101). Through the twentieth century, the US government constantly made changes to the work of Border Patrol. In 1929 it introduced penalties for illegal migration through the Registry Act; in 1946, Congress allowed Border Patrol to execute searches without warrants; in 1954, under Operation Wetback,

masses of people were kicked out of the country like cattle. Although in 1960 there was an impulse toward liberalization, the government was fearful of nonwhite immigration. The events of 9/11 had enormous effects on Border Patrol functioning, as nativists had a chance to “mobilize all fears about immigration” (172). Since then, the main goals of enforcement agencies have been to hunt, incarcerate, and deport undocumented migrants.

*Illegal* is definitely a thought-provoking book. It was published just before the 2020 elections, and Cohen enlightens voters about the problems of dangerous agencies such as CBP and ICE and encourages them to address them. The book provides thorough analysis of border patrol agencies and calls for necessary and bold changes in people’s thinking. Cohen concludes that white nationalist policies toward migration have persisted across time under both Republican and Democratic administrations. Cohen’s ideas contribute not only to the migration literature, but also to real political change. One can doubt the author’s objective view, however, as the book focuses exceptionally on the “worst” experiences. Reading the first chapters, I had the idea that the author advocated the abolishment of the enforcement agencies, but in the conclusion, Cohen clearly states that the agencies have to be reformed but not necessarily abolished, which is a more rational and objective view. American citizens should act now to avoid further degradation of human rights.

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## THE OUTSIDE: Migration as Life in Morocco

Alice Elliot. 2021. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 204 pages. ISBN 9780253054739 (hardback).

*The Outside* by Alice Elliot is a nuanced anthropological account of life in the Tadla, a central region of Morocco with particularly high rates of emigration. The book revolves around the notion of *l-brra*, the “outside” in Moroccan dialect, through which Elliot traces how those who are sometimes labeled in the migration literature the “left-behind”—the term displaying patriarchal thinking, as the author rightly points out—navigate their lives with, around, and through this ubiquitous absence.

After introducing the centrality of the concept of *l-brra*, which transpired through her ethnographic enquiry, the author sets the scene by presenting the context of Moroccan emigration, as well as describing her methodology and fieldwork, a point to which I return below. Chapter 1 accounts for how migrants’ returns and departures structure (or rather *de*-structure, to follow Elliot’s line of argument) temporality, the “tempos of life” in the Tadla. *L-brra* is thus first introduced as a regime of temporality that heavily weighs on nonmigrants by punctuating time in their lives, producing frenetic accelerations as well as abrupt slowdowns. Through and beyond her focus on major life events such as marriages and pregnancies, the author argues that it is ultimately the temporality of kinship itself that is affected by *l-brra*. In the second chapter, imaginaries around emigration are explored by recounting stories told about those who are absent, but also by examining how those who stayed speak about migrants when the latter are back. Elliot unpacks the ambivalence that characterizes these imaginaries, traversed by idealization, vagueness, and contempt. For instance, the author foregrounds the figure of “the animals” that is often used to refer to Moroccan emigrants

by her respondents, the nonmigrants of the Tadla and notably women. The differences run so deep that the author conceptualizes migration as producing ontologically different beings, and emigration as founding a constitutive difference between those living in “the outside” and the rest. The third chapter examines the lives of women married to migrant men, which are shaped by an ever-present absence and a liminal state of permanent waiting, creating a relationship with *l-brra* itself that the author describes as “an intimate distance” (73). This normalization of a state of waiting and anticipation affects married women’s gendered identities and impedes them from being seen by others and seeing themselves as “real women.” They come to acquire a “migrant to be” identity that makes them “an extension of *l-brra*” at home (94). The fourth chapter is dedicated to the unmarried university students with whom the author lived for some months. These young women imagine their futures as spouses to migrant men and this life goal shapes their everyday practices. The chapter focuses in particular on the evening strolls for which this group of women prepares for hours, by putting a lot of effort into looking nice. Living through these projections of their futures, these women have even become experts at reading potential marital prospects: a quick look suffices to know whether a man is a migrant and to which country he has emigrated, on the basis of the clothes he wears and his demeanor. Grappling with the apparent paradox of firmly believing in destiny and the will to actively shape it, the author proposes an original reading of Weber’s writings about Protestantism, and by the same token hints at a critique of Weber’s writings on Islam. The fifth chapter makes a significant contribution to the literature concerned with how migration affects gendered relations (see also Boehm 2012 for another detailed ethnographic study, set in Mexico and the US). In a nuanced manner, Elliot demonstrates that if emigration has come to be constitutive

of masculinity, when men do not live up to the expectations that this status has created during their homecomings, their masculinity risks being eroded. Men who come back without financial means end up “sitting like a woman” in the domestic sphere, failing to fulfill the gendered expectations of other family members. Finally, drawing on the previous ethnographic contributions, the sixth chapter discusses the concept of *l-brra*, arguing for it a place of its own in the anthropological literature, while emphasizing the deeply contingent nature and shifting meanings of the concept in the book’s concluding words.

Undoubtedly, *The Outside* makes an important contribution to gendered analyses of migration by providing thought-provoking and nuanced accounts of how the daily lives of nonmigrant women are strongly shaped by emigration. This contribution notwithstanding, I believe that the author’s positionality deserves more consideration than the book provides to the reader. While the disciplines of anthropology and sociology are making progress in terms of decolonizing their practices, the relations of power that must have permeated this book’s ethnographic fieldwork are not sufficiently unpacked. The author briefly describes her “identity as a researcher” in the introduction, but more than that, it is the positionality of the researcher that always requires critical examination, and here not least because the data collected for this ethnography relied in large part on the hospitality granted by Moroccan families for weeks or even months. While I do not deny the possibility for genuine relations of friendship in research settings, what is at stake in terms of epistemology and knowledge production deserves to be critically reflected upon and dedicated more space. Out of a similar concern, I tended to be frustrated by the author’s broad references to the anthropology of the Middle East and the Muslim world to either contrast or sustain her insights, or her references to *l-brra* as an “indigenous concept” (147) without cautionary comments on such labeling (arguably, “indigeneity” is used in

empowering ways by racialized individuals and communities, yet without precisions one is left wondering about the author’s use of the term and why the less colonial term “emic” wasn’t preferred, for instance). Though this constitutes, I believe, a crucial point that the author might want to address in a future article, the book’s contribution to the understanding of the gendered lives of nonmigrant women in the Tadla is outstanding and deserves to inspire future research in other regions of high emigration.

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#### **WASTELANDS: Recycled Commodities and the Perpetual Displacement of Ashkali and Romani Scavengers**

Eirik Saethre. 2020. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. 252 pages. ISBN 9780520368491.

Eirik Saethre’s story brings us to one of the most ignored, horrendous, and shameful places in Europe: the immor(t)al shantytown. With an unequivocal personal style, Saethre dives deep into the lives of some Ashkali families, describing, making sense of, and explaining to us their daily irrationalities, struggles, and happiness while moving *in* and *out* of different wastelands between Kosovo and Belgrade. Ethnically Ashkali, a group racialized in similar ways to the Roma, they move willingly—but often not so—into different territories of ex-Yugoslavia in order to find work, where they are further discriminated against because of their Muslim identity.

As an “old-school” anthropologist who aims to show how people see and live their lives, Saethre participates in and pictures for us an entire palette of life events, emotions, and decisions of the Ashkali community in Polje, a “temporary and enduring” settlement on the outskirts of Belgrade: from weddings and funerals, newborns, miscarriages, and sudden death to daily quarrels, fights, and friendships. He grasps the endless movement of people in their struggles for basic survival. In doing so, Saethre bridges postsocialist scholarship, ethnic and racial studies, and area studies research that problematizes the Balkans, showing once more the idiosyncrasies and the political pain lived at the peripheries of Europe.

The book premises a traveling into the world of destitution to understand the lives of scavengers. Critical reflections and thoughtful references accompany the book’s narrative, obliging us to think about *our* role in perpetuating stereotypes and accommodating privileged people’s discriminatory policy and behavior, and our tendency to overlook the basic needs of humans just because they are forced into segregated communities and perpetual marginal geographies. Nevertheless, four main topics stand out as being at the same time deeply insightful and left unfinished: gender, religion, globalization, and violence.

Through thick description, Saethre details the context in which certain decisions are taken by Ashkali men, the informants of his ethnographic research. It is not by coincidence that gender plays a minimal role in his analysis. Indeed, the author starts and ends the book by problematizing first his access only to the world of men. At the same time, the conclusion brings us back to a shivering moment of violence against women, witnessed by the ethnographer, that leaves the reader with the taste of untold stories but also with a greater anger toward our—equally as writer and readers—ignorance, impotence, and compliance. Importantly, although readers may expect religion to be central to this

scene, given the region’s decades-long ethnic and religious conflicts, the author prefers to glance over it rather than take a deeper part in this burning debate (Rexhepi 2018). However, some chapters point to the social, political, and cultural distance between the “white,” Christian-Orthodox Serbians and the racialized Ashkali and Roma scavengers, contrasting it with the physical proximity of urban living, with both groups’ dependence on trash recycling—allegedly in completely different ways—and with the vital reality of a temporary and disposable labor force.

The book slowly fleshes out the characters, describing their daily deeds without omitting details about ethnic struggles in ex-Yugoslavian countries, reminiscences of the war, and the constant fear and presence of racial and ethnic hate. For readers familiar with the critiques of what “Balkans” means, the book will be a source of joy, as it does not mention the infamous notion. It dwells on the *a*-historical and tormented place, using a Marquesan style to describe “the place.” Yet it subtly dissects the economic contribution of scavengers not as outsiders but as insiders in the global chain of commodities. Without ignoring these merits, the author could have zoomed out and prompted us to think about who bears the responsibility of this macro-scale negligence. An additional analysis of politics in the region is missing, as well as an open discussion about who benefits from free labor that recycles materials, or who supports the huge scene of “humanitarian” missions that devours the fast-dying bodies of the poor everywhere on the planet. Furthermore, it is left to us to complete the picture concerning the question of why, on the European continent, which heavily promotes a human rights doctrine, thick walls of ignorance are allowed to be raised, maintained, and administrated as such. Who contributes to and has the right to exploit impoverished countries at Europe’s periphery?

Saethre thoroughly describes scenes of violence, mostly related to work and living conditions. Together with the work of other

critical Romani scholars, the book problematizes state violence. One example is a description of how a family that wanted to obtain welfare rights had to first claim a right to citizenship, thus confronting exactly what the state denies them. It is of utmost importance that these *wastelands*, lived by so many people who have survived the collapse of their state, are discussed in Europe, and especially in relation to its eastern borders. To understand the migratory condition of marginalized populations we must learn about the conditioning of peripheral states in charge of executing and implementing policies that lead to “neo-nomadism” or forced mobility.

Saethre’s book is a must-read for its theoretical engagements, but most of all for its honest and unmediated acquaintance with people who are pushed to live in dreadful conditions, who are made invisible to us—the “good” and “white” Europeans—or made vis-

ible as long as they are to be blamed for their condition. Indeed, the book points less to Serbia and more to Europe. This is a Europe that allows the existence of substantial poverty and destitution among its own unrecognized citizens, and is a far worse place than we, the privileged ones, want to admit. The book is yet another piece of evidence not only of the shantytown’s immortality, but above all of our own immorality.

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