
Book Review

Gutekunst, M., Hackl, A., Leoncini, S., Schwarz J.S., Gotz, I. (eds.) 2016. *Bounded Mobilities. Ethnographic Perspectives on Social Hierarchies and Global Inequalities*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

The barrier for me is something that delimits a mental territory, not necessarily a physical one. Something that makes you feel safe. But is it worth spending time controlling the border day and night? And to have a weapon on you at all times in order to protect it? It's the same with money: if you have a lot then you have to keep it safe from others... but what is the point in having loads of money then?

Itai (Leoncini, 2016, p. 78)

In the contemporary world, where migration is on the rise and people are increasingly covering greater distances in an effort to find safety, a job, or just to avoid war, the thoughts of a young kibbutz inhabitant deal with the nature and purpose of borders. These issues are brought together under the concept of mobilities, which represents a fundamental component of human activity that is encompassed by the notions of plurality and the intrinsic properties of mobility and the anthropological characteristics of moving (Hackl et al., p. 23). There are two anthropological assumptions about mobility: 1) that it is a movement imbued with self-ascribed or attributed meaning (Salazar, p. 285); and 2) that it is constantly surrounded by borders – planes of struggle and negotiation (Hackl et al., p. 25). The papers in this volume give insights into these dimensions of mobility through fieldwork and the extensive use of interviews as a primary tool for elucidating the mobilities of asylum seekers, labour migrants, spouses and university professors.

Identity is a component of mobility, and its importance is elucidated in a section entitled 'Identities and Boundaries' through studies that deal with employing identity through individual cultural capital for the purpose of negotiating and crossing boundaries. Osvaldo Constantini and Aurora Massa show how the use of identity produces mobility as well as immobility. Their fieldwork, carried out in Rome and Tigray, touches on the social and historical processes that construct mobilities, as well as on the development of the social and cultural capital necessary for movement across boundaries. Through the cases and stories of two women from the Ethiopian-Eritrean border, Ruta and Misan, the authors show how different 'strategies' of using social ties and cultural capital are employed to overcome Western boundaries. A revealing example of the strategic use of identity may be found in Andreas Hackl's 'Stigmatised Mobility and the Everyday Politics of (In)visibility.' While simple activities such as commuting or movement through the city may be taken for granted, the experience of Palestinians in Tel Aviv shows how stressful and debilitating they can be. From avoiding Arabic ringtones and the *keffiyeh* (scarf) to anticipating delays due to checks and deserving 'bad looks,' moving requires constant decision-making

and adaptation. Without careful planning through identity strategies, the ability (or right) to move becomes ever stranded in the constant production of barriers that produce stigmatised mobility. Hackl's study provides a very intricate view of how actors, identities and boundaries interact in the production of mobility. Sabina Leoncini gives a further description of West Bank residents' coping strategies in 'From One Side of the Wall to the Other.' The historical dimension of borders caught up in before-after narratives shows the parallelism of physical and symbolical borders. As Leoncini shows in her field interviews from Bethlehem, border dualism has dual consequences, from the concrete administrative and communal issues evident in water shortages to the symbolism of structural violence, lack of national identity, and everyday psychological stress.

(Im)mobility also assumes experiences of temporality, imagination and space; the topics of the section on 'Imagination and Time.' Eleni Sideri explores the influence of imagination on physical mobility and belonging of new migrants in Volos, Greece. Different constraints can be seen in the cases of Ahmed, a young asylum seeker from Pakistan, and San, a well-educated South Korean married to a Greek, whose patterns of mobility and immobility are contrasting. While San finds mobility in previous patterns of international educational mobility, Ahmed is constrained by his legal status. On the other hand, social mobility and integration seems much less of a problem for Ahmed. The presence of other Pakistanis creates a comfort zone, and internet technologies offer virtual mobility. As Sideri argues, integration is produced along the specificities of each case - gender, class, education, family connections, personality. A similar situation of immobility can be found in 'On Being stuck in the Wrong Life,' where authors Annika Lems and Christine Moderbacher follow Gerti, a model who formerly worked in Los Angeles. Currently living in her hometown of Vienna, Gerti dreams of mobility and lives by revoking her past experiences, creating a state of extreme existential immobility. As the authors conclude, unfulfillable dreams of the future have potential to intensify a sense of being stuck (Lems, Moderbacher, p. 126). This feeling of being stuck can have various permutations, as Julia Sophia Schwarz shows through cases of asylum seekers in Munich. The author stresses the connection between mobility and integration, where mobility is constrained by financial assistance and knowledge at the local level, and administrative obstacles at the regional level. The two are, however, interchangeable; legal limitations define asylum seekers' status and determine whether they receive free language lessons which determines their overall mobility and integration chances. Interesting views about border regimes from historical anthropology are contained in Karin Lehnert's 'Small-Scale Mobility and National Border Politics: Western European Border Formation in the Nineteenth Century.' This study of a Bohemian enclave in Saxony shows the impact that the creation of customs borders had on small-scale mobility. Smuggling emerged as a response of the people living alongside the border to newly imposed costs that influenced the mobility of goods. As this practice grew, it became more of a political problem in the process of the development of the modern state. Lehnert argues that these examples challenge the idea of a migrant-nation dichotomy, as such cross-boundary movement challenges the idea of the nation itself (Lehnert, p. 159).

In the fourth section, 'Gendered Im/mobilities,' Avital Binah-Pollak presents the topic of social mobility and boundaries in marital mobility between Hong Kongese

men and mainland Chinese women. The author identifies three different spaces or stages of the mobility process: their hometown, the region where they worked as labour migrants, and Hong Kong. The motivation to escape the rural environment is stronger for women than men since it is much more restrictive for them. After labour migration, marriage represents the second step to improving status (hukou) and acquiring a Hong Kong Identity Card, a symbol of a better life. However, in the process of climbing the social scale, marriage migrants continue to reproduce social inequalities while invoking the differences between them and others – mainland tourists, citizens, and labour migrants (Binah-Pollak, p. 176). The relevance of gender is also apparent in Sara Bonfanti's study of Indian migrants in Italy. Using a family ethnographic approach in cities of Lombardy, Bonfanti analyses the dominant role the family has in mobility and in the production of the culture of migration. Mobilities vary: the first generation of women had difficulties integrating due to the lack of integration factors such as good language skills, a driver's licence, and opportunities for employment outside home (Bonfanti, p. 198). While for the former individuals Italy was the final destination, younger generations consider Italian naturalization the key to extending mobility. The latter perspective is centred around mobility and status planning, whereby the capability of moving (motility) is largely dependent on the ability to negotiate a position within the family and local community.

The section on 'Virtual (Im)mobilities' deals with problems of mobility and virtual space. Miriam Gutekunst investigates mobility planning in the context of increasing digitalization. The pervasiveness of technology is encapsulated in the case of a young couple – Zineb, a young Moroccan, and Najim, a middle-aged Iraqi – living in Germany. The impact of technology ranges from the creation of long-range connections using platforms such as Skout (a social network platform that connects young Muslims) to policy threats that emerge in relation to the newly emerging practices, but also to the relief that these provide in cases of immobility. The new forms of communication promoted by such social network platforms 'endangers' national borders through facilitating information transfer across borders, in doing so becoming the object of migration policies. On the other hand, virtual communication using various forms of software can increase credibility in situations when marriage validity is being assessed by migration officials. Digital media also produces new cultural practices and new borders which transform democratic space, as Daniel Kunzelmann illustrates in 'Virtual Im_mobilities.' The cases of the private use of public land in Tel Aviv, the Spanish PAH group for victims of eviction, and the Bavarian PIRATES party online convention – based around computer coding – show how the understanding and use of new cultural practices change power relations. While in the Israeli case political space becomes polymedia and hybrid, the Spanish PAH demonstrates its knowledge through technology and its use in battling eviction through the legal system (Kunzelmann, p. 237).

The final section concerns 'Fixations in Mobility and Multilocality.' Efforts to regulate migration and mobility through development programs can reveal hierarchical relations reminiscent of colonialism. Maria Schwertl shows three features of the development hype backlash: the immobilizing political outcome of development programs that treat migrants as development workers, but do not count them as policy actors; migrant bias that assumes the immobility of transnational

networks, treating those affected as passive recipients; and the policy orientation towards their country of origin, aimed at the immobilization of the sending country. For Schwertl, the recent developmental hype that has emerged from the new views about state, labour and civil society is aimed at global governance and treating migration and migrants as only one of the variables in the grand scheme of development. Cédric Duchêne-Lacroix, Monika Götzö and Karin Sontag's 'The Experience of Multilocal Living' focuses on the lives of three people (Aude, a medical nurse, Bernd, a Scandinavian entrepreneur working in Switzerland, and Florence, an academic oriented towards international collaboration). Their private and professional lives shape their experience of mobility and multilocality through spatiality regimes – 'areas for actions which enable people to act in certain way within certain conflicts, in a complex but predetermined way' (Duchêne-Lacroix, et al., p. 275).

The studies in *Bounded Mobilities* present very diverse topics. The shared characteristic of these studies, rich in ethnographic data, is participants' aims of fulfilling social or spatial goals in their mobility. Their efforts at mobility are designed to increase belonging and membership. People try to acquire status through mobility using different strategies and identities and cultural and social capital in everyday encounters with boundaries. (Im)mobilities do not concern the *lack* of movement, but the inability to leave behind a factual or symbolic border. To move is to cross a border. If one cannot do this (either remaining constantly on the border or near it), one remains stuck. Immobility has consequences on personal wellbeing. As Salazar points out, the freedom of movement involves developing the infrastructure to defend free movement and the actions of some, and strictly curtailing the freedom of others (James, 2005, 27. in: Salazar, p. 287). For Salazar, this is also the reason that we should not equate free movement with migration, but rather with mobility (Salazar, p. 287). What the authors show us is how mobilities can be used as an indicator that exposes the forces of inequality and exclusion that are present in borders and boundaries. It is in the examination of these borders where lies the greatest value of this book and its relevance for the various social sciences. While diversity is one of the strengths of this volume, it is also a weakness. Even among the great contributions (Hackl et. al., Leoncini, Bonfanti) there is some lack of theoretical structure, and occasionally it seems that some of the studies could have significantly benefited from more deliberation (Leoncini).

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