
Regimes of Mobility: Imaginaries and Relationalities of Power, edited by Noel B. Salazar and Nina Glick Schiller. London: Routledge, 2014. pp. ix + 151. ISBN. 9781138013032. Hardcover.¹

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Mobility in all its shades is inherent to the human species; by virtue of their physiognomy humans are naturally bound to move from place to place. Over the years, human mobility has constituted a major field of enquiry for academics in fields as varied as geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, and literature, to name but these. Methodological considerations in this field have largely overemphasised the nation-state approach, known as nationalist methodology, which pays much attention to nations as territorial entities in understanding how and why people move. This approach has also relied on binaries and dichotomies such as those opposing mobility and immobility (stasis), intra-national and transnational mobility, among others. It is in an effort to upset this approach that the book under review steps in to propose a regimes-of-mobility methodological dimension to the study of human mobility. The new approach foregrounds the influence of power dynamics/relations in the study of mobility and proposes the elimination of binaries while bringing hitherto under-studied aspects of migration like sedentariness and internal/intra-national migration into focus.

Originally published as a special issue of the *Journal of Ethic and Migration Studies* (Volume 39, Issue 2, 2013), this volume comprises an introductory chapter by Noel Salazar and Nina Schiller (its editors)

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and seven chapters by other contributors. The introductory chapter provides the novel methodological approach that orientates all its other chapters. Chapter two, by Dace Dzenovska, challenges the prevalent nationalist methodological approach to the field by examining migration trends among Latvians who travel to central Europe in search of better lives. Chris Vasantkumar in chapter three discusses the movements of Tibetans on both sides of the Himalayas and proposes “methodological belongingism” (38) as an alternative to nation-state orientated methodologies. In chapter four, with reference to the Anglophone-Francophone bilingual and bi-cultural identities of Cameroon, Michaela Pelican examines international migration in the country, pointing out variations regarding international mobility within the same nation-state. Paolo Gaibazzi’s chapter five demonstrates how agrarian practices in the Gambia, somehow meant to counter international emigration, rather reinforce it. In chapter six, Rebecca Peters takes on the intricacies of power relations vis-à-vis mobility within the (international) development sector in Angola. Players of the Jembe traditional wooden goat-skinned drum in Guinea and how they migrate within and outside their country constitute Pascal Gaudette’s concern in chapter seven. In the concluding chapter, Barak Kalir, using the movement of temporary workers from China to Israel, argues that the regimes-of-mobility approach proposed in the book should allow for a focus on the subjects of mobility, not just the role of the state in mobility.

As evident in its structure above, the book adopts a very global approach in its scope by bringing together ethnographic case studies from different parts of the world with emphasis on various and largely novel aspects of mobility. The examples used by its contributors span countries in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. This continental diversity coupled with the combination of varied issues such as agriculture, traditional dance, international development, intra- and inter-national migration do not only contribute in making its scope wide-ranging but help in reinforcing one of its central arguments which is their call for a more holistic approach to the study of mobility. In all its seven chapters, the book demonstrates that relationalities of power, that is, authority in all possible forms (state power, employer authority, Western migrant privileges, etc.) play a vital role in shaping the

decisions and ways in which various people engage in mobility. This justifies their initial claim for the introduction of a regimes perspective given that the word regimes incarnates many forms of authority besides state authority. Within such contexts, there is little or no surprise when Kalir asserts that “there are more losers and less winners among those who exercise mobility” (132). Salazar and Schiller begin the volume with the same affirmation in different words: “There are few winners and many losers” (12).

Although the book successfully substantiates its arguments against the nationalist methodological approach, the use of nations as spatial references and yardsticks of power in it is rather overwhelming but for the fact that it somehow clamours for a holistic approach and that Kalir’s chapter proposes emphasis on the subjects of mobility rather than states and proves this by focusing more on the Chinese Tseng as he moves within China and between China and Israel. The above notwithstanding, this volume is an incontestable addition to the field of mobility studies which sets the pace for the mobility of both humans and critical paradigms.

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