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BOOK REVIEWS

Bak Jorgensen, Martin & Schierup, Carl-Ulrik (2016) *Politics of Precarity: Migrant Conditions, Struggles and Experiences*, Leiden: Brill. 329 pp.

Martin Bak Jorgensen and Carl-Ulrik Schierup have edited an important book titled *Politics of Precarity: Migrant Conditions, Struggles and Experiences,* the main topic of which is the precarisation of migration and the role migrants play in struggles against precarity. As the book shows, in the context of progressing precarisation of labour, citizenship and social, political and civil rights, also called as the 'Brazilianisation of the West', the migrants become the harbingers of South in the North (p. 9). They tell the North the story of always already precarious work and livelihood (p. 84), exuding 'the faint odour of the waste disposal tip which in its many disguises haunts the nights of the prospective casualties of rising vulnerability' (Bauman, 2003: 56). This timely collection recognises, in particular, the extensive vulnerability and disadvantage of refugees, asylum seekers or undocumented migrants in the 'globally extending surplus population' (p. 5). Indeed, it is more and more difficult for migrants delivering the message of precarity to become citizens and to acquire substantive membership in the community, including access to political and social rights (p. 17).

Such an angle of the book requires rethinking the concepts of precariat and precarity and their positioning among the past and contemporary scientific discussions. The editors believe (Chapter 1) that precarity and precariat should be approached as the 'new paradigmatic terms for studies of social inequality, disadvantage and poverty' (p. 3). Even though the *Politics of Precarity* takes as its point of departure Guy Standing's important contribution *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (2016), which has widely popularised these concepts as signs of a new global norm of flexible and insecure life, it aims however to go beyond its perimeters. In particular, the *Politics of Precarity* offers a diversified perspective of precarious lives in various contexts and practices. In doing so it strives to not only focus on roots and experiences of precarity but, importantly, to also treat precarity as a political concept able to engender resistance against the 'systemic structuration through which it operates' (p. 6).

The chapters 2-4 of the book engage in discussion on precarity, calling for its robust analysis and deconstruction. Maribel Casas-Cortés (Chapter 2) and Ronaldo Munck (Chapter 4) offer genealogical analysis of the concept. Munck, in particular, links precarity with earlier notions of marginality and informality in the South. On the other hand, Casas-Cortés presents precarity as a toolbox or a proposition that 'unfolds as an unfixed processes of summing up, engaging and recombining distinct circumstances and emerging problematics […]', allowing us to rethink the limits of labour and citizenship (p. 47). Similarly, for Martin Bak Jorgensen (Chapter 3), the danger of precarity becoming an 'empty signifier' should prompt us to ask not what it is but rather what it does.

Therefore, the 'precarity in practice' and 'practices of precarity' constitute the focus of remaining nine chapters of the book that present concrete case studies of migrant and citizen precarity in various states such as Turkey (Nazli Senses), Cyprus (Gregoris Ioannou), Spain and Sweden (Anna Gavanas and Ines Calzada), China (Mimi Zou and Susanne Bregnbæk), Russia (John Round and Irina Kuznetsova-Morenko) or the USA (Peter Schultz Jorgensen) and South Africa (Carl-Ulrik Schierup). Even though the main focus of the book is to bring migration within the scope of precarity studies, it does much more by inviting the reader to reflect on general questions concerning the political and social belonging to the state and society. These questions are particularly important in the context of the current austerity measures resulting in restructuring labour markets and limiting social, political and civil rights not only of migrants but also of citizens (p. 3). Indeed, many chapters discussing the position of migrants do so by relating it to the situation of citizens. Other chapters focus on the rights of citizens in the context of migration. To be sure, in many of the studied countries 'a life and work experience, embodied in precarity' is not typical of migrants. As pointed by Nazli Senses (Chapter 5), many citizens also end up in similar working and living conditions (p. 113). Precarity implies flexibility, total availability and temporality that affect not only the migrants but also increasingly the citizens (p. 7). This contributes to shifting the boundaries between the former and the latter and repositioning them based on the criteria different than migrant/citizen distinction.

This phenomenon of precarisation of citizenship goes beyond the instances familiar to us already, such as *hukou* house-hold registration system affecting millions of internal migrant workers in China. As many authors in this book show, citizenship has been continuously losing its substantive meaning. The so called 'ant tribe' of young unemployed university graduates in China, sharing the fate of many migrant workers (Chapter 9), or retired Swedish citizens residing in Spain without support, health benefits and often resources

to return and live in Sweden (Chapter 6), are signs of these changes. But precarisation also affects the formal aspect of citizenship status, as shown in other studies; for instance, in the context of new laws broadening the basis for removing citizenship from naturalised citizens also, if that would render them stateless (Mantu, 2014). Interestingly, these changes happen while more European countries grant citizenship in return of financial investments, sometimes even without the requirement of residence or good behaviour (Dzankic, 2012). Here, the advancing frontier of capitalism coupled with progressing precarisation (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) creates new divisions between good and bad or desired and undesired citizens, forcing us to rethink the basis of belonging to the state.

Still, in comparison with citizens, migrants as the harbingers of precarity represent its quintessence (p. 113). However, as the book contributors also show, the strategies and practices of those in the most precarious situation can serve as new forms of resistance. Here, the book follows Karl Polanyi's call for 'countermovement for decommodification and restitution of the commons' through approaching the ordinary lives of precarious migrant workers as resistance (p. 225). In their discussion on mobile commons, Nicos Trimikliniotis, Dimitris Parsanoglou and Vassilis Tsianos (Chapter 11) spell out the need to turn to 'politics of possibility' and underline the role of the subaltern migrants in creating new forms of subjectivity (pp. 225, 227). '[T]he subaltern can and indeed *do* speak; they speak back, but most importantly they act and inscribe social struggles' (p. 239). Here, migrants are also the harbingers of new forms of 'socialities, solidarities and connectivities' from the outside of the Global North (p. 239) that can reshape our modes of citizenship.

In this context, the main shortcoming of the book lies in its limited reflection on the relationship and interlinkage between precarious migrants and citizens. Even though it shows the bright and dark sides of this relationship (for instance Chapters 3 and 12 respectively), it does not delve deeper into the ways solidarity in precarity could act as a tool to address increasing nationalism, racism and xenophobia of the contemporary 'Weimar moment' (Kaplan et al., 2012). Indeed, the increasing hostility towards migrants expressed both by those in most precarious position and those threatened by precarisation provides the real obstacle to the idea of precariat as a countermovement. The most pressing question therefore is, indeed, how to engage both migrants and citizens together, in creating new connectivities and socialities in everyday life. Even though the book provides an important starting point for these reflections, more research and discussion is needed.

Politics of Precarity constitutes an important and insightful read for scholars of political science, law and other disciplines, as well as activists interested in conceptualisation of migration in the context of precarisation. It will also be useful for those interested in alternative narratives of migration going beyond dominant vulnerability and securitisation discourses.

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Buskens, Léon & Sandwijk, Annemarie (eds.) (2016) *Islamic Studies in the Twenty-first Century. Transformations and Continuities*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 284 pp.

Islam and Muslims have been frequent topics of public debates at least during the last twenty years, unfortunately not for good reasons. Scholars of a wide range of disciplines (law, sociology, anthropology, history, theology, international relations, and political science) are studying Islam and Muslim societies, while at the same time politicians and journalists are referring to Islam, especially after the violent attacks that take place in the West. Distorted views about Islam or even a complete lack of substantive knowledge is common. In an era when Islam is seen as a threat and Muslims are confronted as scapegoats, this volume *Islamic Studies in the Twenty-first Century. Transformations and Continuities* by Léon Buskens and Annemarie Sandwijk offers an opportunity to learn about Islam. By showing the differences, changes and variations of Islamic studies throughout time, this book adds to the existing literature on Islamic studies (e.g., Ahmed & Sonn 2010; Daneshgar & Saleh 2016).

This edited volume examines the transformations and continuities of Islamic studies in the twenty-first century. The two editors, Buskens and Sandwijk, are specialised scholars on the issues of Islam and have put together a group of researchers with a specialisation on Islamic studies from different perspectives. The book is based on the paper presentations that have taken place during the last seven years, since 2010, when the Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies (NISIS, a research school in which nine universities participate and have as a focus the interdisciplinary study of Islam) was founded.

The book comprises of a very informative introduction, six sections, and 11 chapters. The first section includes three chapters focused on the texts, through the anthropological perspective (chapter 1), the textual aspects of religious authority in pre-modern Islam (chapter 2) and the contribution of texts in the study of religious rituals, particularly the *Fiqh* texts (chapter 3). The second section deals critically with the issue of gender in the Muslim world through a textual (chapter 4) and a gender politics perspectives (chapter 5). The third section focuses on theology and the history of ideas examining the power, orthodoxy and salvation in classical Islamic theology (chapter 6) and the dialectical theology in search of the modern Islam (chapter 7); while the fourth section deals with Islamic law and more specifically the classical Islamic legal theory as ideology (chapter 8) and Islamic law in the modern world (chapter 9). The fifth section studies the Islamic networks with a particular focus on Sufi networks examining vernacular cosmopolitanism as an ethical disposition (chapter 10); and the last section, in a way of conclusion by Buskens again, discusses the oscillations and tensions in the old relationship between the Middle Eastern studies and Islam (chapter 11).

As it is stated in the introduction, the book aims at offering an overview of some of the important issues in the study of Islam that

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scholars discuss at present (p. 11). The study of Islam has a long history in western tradition and academia that started about two centuries ago. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the major issue was how to govern the Muslims living in established colonies (India, Algeria, etc.). A century later, colonial government was still an important issue, though it was linked to the declaration of jihad by the Ottoman caliph in an effort to help his German allies. Again a century later, questions of governance continue to play a crucial role but now mainly linked to the presence of Muslims in Europe and in the West in general, the control of natural resources in the Middle East and to what is called the 'war on terror'. This is how Buskens briefly describes the changes of research focus throughout history, adding that the past four decades show a notable shift from philological and historical to anthropological and other social science approaches to Islam. Meanwhile in some countries, probably because of the current developments, the dominance of anthropology or social sciences is replaced by the primacy of political sciences, international relations and security studies (p. 11).

Since it is not easy to analytically discuss all the chapters, despite their importance and interest, I will focus on two specific themes. One of the most important topic in Islamic studies is gender, a topic that has caused many discussions and on which a variety of books and articles have been written on issues like the veil and religious conversion (van Nieuwkerk 2006; Mansson - McGinty 2006; Joseph 2007; Gabriel & Hannan 2011). This controversial topic is examined in the second section of the book through two chapters. The first one written by Marion Katz focuses on the textual study of gender. Having in mind all the previous and recent literature on women and/in Islam, she discusses the problem of focusing on the religious texts alone because, as she argues, sometimes the existing texts do not correspond with social reality (pp. 91-92). For example, a text might refer to the respect for certain types of women in previous times but this might not be the case for every woman of that era. That is why she argues that those studying gender in Islam should focus not only on texts and religious ideology but also on social practices following the wave emerged in the 1990s (p. 92).

The second chapter in this part is written by Dorothea Schulz, who critically examines the existing scholarship on gender politics in the modern world. This is a very well structured and interesting endeavour presenting all the significant developments of this scholarship on gender including the initially existing male bias, the gradual emergence of women's studies, then the gender studies and the cultural construction of gender as well as the challenges of the classical feminism approaches. Then she discusses the gender-politics research on and in the Middle East, presenting and commenting all the new developments and trends. One of the most important suggestions is that an analytical framework linking a macro-sociological study of politics to the accounts of micro-politics of gender and to the changing intergenerational relations should be taken seriously into consideration for future research in the field (p. 129).

The last chapter that actually summarises the situation of Islamic studies is of significant importance. Mainly focused on the Middle East, Buskens describes the transformations in Islamic studies from the 1970s with an interest in philology and intellectual history to the social sciences including social history (p. 247). Of course, history has remained an important field and discipline but has become more of a social science with an extensive interest in gender relations and popular culture. However, as Buskens argues, the main objective of this chapter was to deconstruct the equation of Middle East and Islam as well as to criticize the arabocentrism in Middle East and Islamic studies (p. 259).

Overall, this is a very interesting edited volume trying to discuss both the past and current developments in the field of Islamic studies, and a very ambitious endeavour. It is understandable that not all aspects of such a large topic could be examined, but in my opinion some additional studies, for example, of an anthropological background might be useful. The book is thus a fruitful combination of different scholars and themes, and it manages to present the changes and transformations of Islamic studies. As Buskens argues in his final chapter, the future of the field depends on developing a broad view of Islam as a cultural phenomenon with many facets, and for the understanding of which, the triad of philology, history and ethnography offers all the necessary theories and methods (p. 262). That way, the volume is a useful tool for all those interested in the field of Islamic studies such as students, researchers and scholars. It is also a useful read to journalists and any other persons, who wish to be aware of the state of art in Islamic studies and have a more adept image about Islamic societies.

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Fingerroos, Outi, Tapaninen, Anna-Maria & Tiilikainen, Marja (eds.) (2016) *Perheenyhdistäminen. Kuka saa perheen Suomeen, kuka ei ja miksi?*, Tampere: Vastapaino. 250 pp.

The book *Perheenyhdistäminen*[1], edited by Outi Fingerroos, Anna-Maria Tapaninen and Marja Tiilikainen, is a collection of eight essays, which mainly analyzes the juridical administrative practices of the family reunification of refugees and other migrants with humanitarian residence permits in Finland. The ten authors behind the essays research related topics in Finland within different universities and research groups in the field of social, political and humanist research. They present a picture of the state that controls immigration through a narrow definition of family and ever strengthening laws, regulations and bureaucratic practices demanding the impossible from the sponsor as well as his or her family members abroad.

The book was published during the latest amendments, after which the family reunification became rather theoretical than a realistic option for even more people due to the high income requirements and time limits for applications. The timing made many arguments of the authors visible in practice. For example, the authors point out that the scientific research does not play a role in the decision making process, which Fingerroos suggests to be a result of the passive attitude of politicians in creating more humane and evidence based policies (p. 87). The amendment process made this even more visible: the few consulted researchers, institutes and research associations categorically opposed the amendment, but

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this did not influence the result. The arguments of authors, such as lacking expert consultation, the rather rhetoric consideration of the best interest of child (Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen in Chapter 4) and human rights (Miia Halme-Tuomisaari in Chapter 8), are even more actual and interesting in this context.

One of the central topic in the book is the asymmetry between the variety of existing family constellations within the society and among people who end up being sponsors in family reunification process, and the definition of a family in the juridical administrative process. The different processes of constructing and reconstructing a family are presented by Fingerroos, Tapaninen and Tiilikainen, who contest a nuclear family as a 'natural' unit looking into its history (Chapter 1). Tiilikainen, Abdirashid Ismail and Mulki Al-Sharmani give an example of the variety within the Somali families and point out that different strategies are needed for transnational families to exist (Chapter 2). Views about the meaning of legal definition of the family vary within the articles. Tiilikainen, Ismail and Al-Sharmani make a hopeful statement, which seems to predict that there could be a change in the policies, if the factual variety within the family constellations would be acknowledged (pp. 62-63). At the same time, throughout the articles, the strict definition of a family is analyzed to serve as a method of migration control against the threat of uncontrollable 'streams' of migrants, presented in political processes and media. The family as a legal unit within the migration related legislation and administration as well as the actual family constellations are contrasted throughout the book. The definitions are criticized for not reflecting the realities and for serving control rather than granting people right to family life. There is, though, no attempt to propose a better definition for a family for administrative and juridical purposes.

The focus of analysis of many articles is on the juridical and administrative practices and institutions producing those. The juridical realities are presented to be in line with a very narrow understanding of a 'real' family life. Any earlier family history, low income or long absence – even if produced by the application process – can hinder the family living together (Kuusisto-Arponen in Chapter 4, Saara Pellander & Johanna Leinonen in Chapter 5). The whole way from the application process to the administrative court is pictured as an impossible bureaucratic project that serves more to control the influx of migrants than to respect the right to family life.

The analysis of activities of institutions is based on the results of the practices, gathering data mainly from administrative documents (Pellander & Leinonen in Chapter 5; Tapaninen in Chapter 6), as well as interviews (Fingerroos in Chapter 2, Kuusisto-Arponen in Chapter 4). It is pointed out as a problem that there seems to be unwillingness among the central institutions to cooperate with the researches. The Ministry of the Interior is mentioned as one of those institutions (p. 80). Perhaps for this reason, the Ministry of the Interior has been left out from the analysis; a part of the image of the role of different actors stays ambivalent. The politicians as decision-makers are described as the principal user of the power, even if there are different historical descriptions about the active role of Immigration Service in the amendments and policy processes, described for example in the official history of the Finnish Immigration Service (Leitzinger 2010). The Immigration Service is shown through its single workers, who are 'well meaning' or give expert interviews, which sometimes stay uncontextualized (pp. 97−98).

There seems to be a need for more institutional analysis about the roles of different institutions and people using political power within the migration regime, which becomes clear through the administrative analysis. The role of Immigration Service as an active policy-maker is presented earlier by journalist Jussi Förbom (2014). This argument is at the same time accepted (p. 237) and rejected (pp. 79-80) among the authors, without arguing on behalf or against the original arguments of Förbom. The capable civil servants in a cooperation friendly office are used once more in the epilogue to contrast the unwillingness of the political decision makers to participate in research projects (p. 206). After the publication of the book, the strictly executive role of the Immigration Service presented is contested by the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat interviewing the immigration service workers (HS 4.9.2016).

The above-mentioned analysis of Immigration Service's role would have needed more profundity and evidence to clarify the arguments of the authors. Also, the whole book would be more consistent with more accuracy in chosen terms and argumentation. It is unclear why Tiilikainen, Ismail and Al-Sharmani use the Finnish terms 'somali' (refers to the ethnic group) and 'somalialainen' (refers to the nationality) as synonyms (Chapter 2), and Halme-Tuomisaari chooses to use the word 'landless' instead of 'stateless' to describe the latter (Chapter 8). Sometimes the arguments behind the statements are not obvious. For example, Kuusisto-Arponen argues in the same text for and against radicalization of the unaccompanied minors. Although the contradictory comments on radicalization start and end the essay, the subject is not discussed in the text and the reasoning remains unclear (pp. 90-92, 109).

The book cover provoked discussions in social media after being published. A cover is never only a neutral or insignificant picture, even in academic context. It stands alone even when people don't read the actual text. The provocative cover is a striking contrast to the contents of the book. The book itself calls for less stereotypical understanding of the family, criticize the use of hostile terminology and tends to argue against the generalized assumption on the administrative level of the abuse of the 'system'. The cover presents an 'anchor child', hostile concept criticized in several essays (for example pp. 9, 84-85, 103-104, 204). The child holds the hand of his mother and father creating a picture of a classic nuclear family. Maybe because of the graphic design, the anchor or feet of the child seem to be deeply embedded in something that looks like an ocean. The book was published half a year after the picture of dead Alan Kurd's corpse on the beach called the world's attention on the drowning children at the Mediterranean Sea. The pale hearts are left at the background, although the emotional contact within the family is the central aspect in the book. The cover reproduces many of the stereotypical representations of migrant families criticized by the authors.

The authors offer an overview to the administrative and juridical realities the migrants and their families have to face in contemporary Finland. It could be useful as a general overview for anyone working around the topic, but also as course literature for social work and law students. This analysis could also offer a base for self-reflection among the policy-makers and state officials. It is necessary for anyone working with migrants and their families to understand the discrepancy between the theoretical rights and administrative practices.

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Tanner, Arno & Söderling, Ismo (eds.) (2016) *Venäjänkieliset Suomessa: Huomisen suomalaiset*.[2] Turku: Institute of Migration. 208 pp.

The edited volume *Venäjänkieliset Suomessa: Huomisen suomalaiset* of Arno Tanner and Ismo Söderling (2016) is an important contribution to the existing knowledge about the Russian-speaking population in Finland. Despite the largeness and complexity of the local Russian-speaking population, some specific groups and aspects have received disproportionate research and public interest, while other areas remain still nearly unidentified. With the recent development of Russia's foreign policy trying to have more impact on the Russian diasporas abroad, acquiring more versatile and in-depth knowledge on the Russian-speaking population in Finland is in the interest of Finnish authorities and officials. As Tanner mentions in the foreword (pp. 6-7), more understanding on the Russian-speaking population with regards to their composition, habits and mind-sets should be acquired to put forward relevant policies that advance integration instead of marginalisation. The volume thus offers a multidisciplinary coverage on the subject, discussing the historical development of the Russian-speaking population in Finland throughout several centuries; its current composition and position in Finnish society; its presence and roles in local Russian-language as well as Finnish media coverage over time; its political role in Russia's foreign policy; as well as offering new insights about Russian-speakers' religiosity and its role to their identity. The accounts of historians and thus historical perspective in general, however, dominate this volume, which is to some extent a limitation.

Söderling's article (pp. 9−15) that is an introduction of the whole book, sets the general stage of the Russian-speaking population in Finnish society, drafts their current situation and hints briefly towards what is to come in the future. The chapter, however, does not highlight enough the high diversity of the Russian-speaking population, and thus, already at the very beginning of the book, the critical reader will be (justly) tuned to ask: is there after all enough sensibility to the diversity issue and how it will be addressed?

Although the book title indicates Russian-speakers (in Finland) as an umbrella notion for discussing the subject, most articles talk about certain kind of Russian *minority* in wider or narrower terms. Meanwhile, the notions are largely overlapping; there are always clear historical reasons behind the preference of one to another notion by each author. While the aim of the whole book is to address the assumedly wider and fuzzier group of Russian-speakers defined by their primary language, it is somewhat surprising that the volume in the end completely omits several additionally existing recent groups of Russian-speakers in Finland, such as those coming from different republics of the former Soviet Union. Only the Russian-speakers from the neighbouring Estonia are mentioned (Lehtonen pp. 19-20) but solely as part of the Ingrian returnee group, not considering those who have other backgrounds. The groups of Russian-speakers that are left undiscussed are not numerous but still significant, and considering the historical context, it remains essential to understand them as possibly rather distinct groups that importantly are *not* the subjects of Russia.

For the general public as well as academic understanding about the complexity of Russian-speaking population in Finland, or to be more exact – just historically somehow Russian-flavoured –I consider the contribution of Tuomas Lehtonen (pp. 17-40), providing a detailed overview about the whole population using all available statistics, one of the most important in this book. The data gaps and overlaps resulting from using different categories (e.g., mother tongue, primary language, place of birth citizenship, etc.) for the purpose of collecting different data are particularly well managed and the limitations clearly explained whenever applicable. As a result, the reader not only gets an up-to-date overview of various aspects relevant to discussing the Russian-speaking population in Finland, but also a guideline on how to treat the available data.

The following three articles each give more insight about Russian-speaking minority in Finland, discussing its composition through the history of various groups: Antero Leitzinger (pp. 41−75) primarily about the old Russians; Toivo Flink (pp. 76−95) about Ingrian returnees; and Elina Kahla (pp. 96−124) about the Russian Orthodox community in Finland. The need to understand the special features of Russian Orthodoxy and the role that religion plays in the Russian-speaking people's everyday experiences and identity formation in Finland is currently gaining a momentum. For example, Tiaynen-Qadir (2016) has recently inquired the issue and found that practising Russian Orthodoxy in Finland, Russia and elsewhere has the power of establishing a certain kind of transnational aesthetic space that produces common experiences and a sense of belonging across borders, but she also points out the uniqueness of each experience in her study. In that way, it becomes problematic to assume that it could be possible to automatically group Russian-speakers in Finland by any characteristic (religion, language, citizenship or anything else) without running the risk of oversimplification.

Adding to the growing understanding on the Russian-speakers as a transnationally active population in Finland, are the next three articles by Dmitry Strovsky and Jukka Pietiläinen (pp. 125−139), Jukka Pietiläinen (pp. 140−152) and Olga Davydova-Minguet (pp. 153−187); these articles focus on the Russian-speaking population in relation to media and Davydova-Minguet's account is the most novel. By taking a look at the Estonian Bronze Soldier[3] case and examining heated discussions that took place in internet forums and other internet channels popular among Russian-speakers in Finland, she is able to demonstrate that the local Russian-speaking population is far from being connected to Russia and Finland only. Instead it is a part of the larger transnational media and ethnoscapes, for example, virtually operating in information spaces where anybody, not necessarily even related by ethnicity or nationality, is able to participate in the knowledge production. Because of its symbolic value cross-nationally, the Bronze Soldier case evoked extraordinarily strong emotions among Russians, Russian-speakers as well as Finns of various background, usually but not exclusively positioned diametrically depending on the historical understanding of the Great Patriotic War.

One of the red lines through all the articles of the book is the question, whether the non-problematic coexistence of the Finnish and Russian speaking populations in Finland is possible at all and what does it take. Meanwhile the authorities contextualise Russian-speakers among all immigrant groups, which enables them to estimate their position in Finnish society as relatively good, the subjective perceptions put forward by the Russian-speakers themselves in various studies of different fields (e.g., Pöllänen 2013, Jaakkola 2005) continuously show them being in a marginal position in Finland. There is clearly a difference in what is considered to be a good or even sufficient situation for the Russian-speaking population by the Finnish authorities and Russian-speaking people themselves. With regards to integration, while the Russian-speakers themselves

think that the key factor is an equal access to jobs and other resources, then for Finns, it is in fact about the Russian-speakers' affirmation of getting a mental divorce with Russia. For now, as also noted by Pietiläinen (p. 150), the Russian-speakers seem to have few chances in Finland for good integration unless they eventually wish to give up their cultural ties to their historical homeland, because anything political is also cultural.

Because of the current political turmoil caused by the Russian state, the situation of the Russian-speakers in Finland will not obviously show any tendency to relax soon. On the contrary, not only does the Russian state work hard to politicise the various Russian diasporas abroad including Finland as analysed by Arto Luukkanen (pp. 188-206), but the media both in Finland and Russia actively participate in producing new provocative images and narratives (Davydova-Minguet ibid.) that have a negative impact on the local Russian-speaking population. While being objectified and having no way to control the image they are associated with as a group, the Russian-speakers in Finland are subjugated to a complex sense of insecurity related not only to their socially and economically precarious situation but also encompassing the more emotional and cultural dimensions locally and transnationally. The increasing sense of insecurity among the Russian-speakers in Finland on various bases, and handling those insecurities daily depending on one's subject position among the various Russian-speaking groups in Finland, is certainly an issue that deserves closer examination in the future.

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Vaughan-Williams, Nick (2015) *Europe's Border Crisis. Biopolitical Security and Beyond*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 178 pp.

While the media's depiction of migration to Europe draws on the terminology of crisis and popularizes the idea of a 'refugee crisis', not least since summer 2015, Nick Vaughan-Williams' timely book invites the reader to explore a conceptual 'crisis' by digging into the fundamental contradictions that European migration policies entail. An International Relations scholar at the University of Warwick, Nick Vaughan-Williams offers innovative insights into biopolitical analytical frameworks to account for the intrinsic tensions that characterize the European Union's attempts to manage migration. The author's point of departure is the observation that EU discourses and policies increasingly intertwine the language of security and that of humanitarianism. From this perspective, the 'irregular' migrant represents both a potential threat to the European societies and a political subject, whose life must be protected. The key question implied by this dilemma, and the one the author pursues throughout the book, is: 'Why do European humanitarian border security practices often expose the very "irregular" migrants they are supposed to protect to dehumanization and death?' (p. 3).

The author argues that there exists a conceptual gap within the critical border and migration studies that fail to account for this paradox. The book dismisses, for instance, the 'rhetoric' vs. 'reality' frame, an interpretation within the migration studies that is widely used to account for the contradiction between discourse and practice, as analytically limited and politically problematic. The author sets out to explore the biopolitical paradigm in original ways to explain this ambivalence theoretically. The strength of the book lies in critically assessing and combining various strands of biopolitical analysis, from Michel Foucault's biopolitical paradigm that captures governmentality through the optimization of life, to Giorgio Agamben's thanatopolitics of dehumanization and Jacques Derrida's zoopolitics of animalization. Nick Vaughan-Williams warns against an unbalanced focus on either the vitalist or the lethal dimensions of biopolitical governance, his intention being to elaborate a theoretical framework with this paradox 'built-in'. Drawing on Roberto Esposito, the author furthermore invites the reader to re-think the border as a biopolitical immune system 'that seeks to defend the life of the body politic such that "society" and "the border" become indistinguishable' (p. 96). The 'medicalisation of security' certainly represents an expanding and promising field of research within critical migration and border literatures. If the author quotes many non-governmental organizations' (NGO) reports to provide empirical foundations for the arguments he develops, these are mainly illustrative and the book reads primarily as a philosophical and theoretical journey leading to his concluding argument for the emergence of 'affirmative borders'. Through the latter notion, Nick Vaughan-Williams urges a re-conceptualization of the border as a 'site of encounter with the other' and as a 'politically productive, if, nonetheless, risky (and also potentially violent) opening to the common' (p. 123); thus attempting to shift no less than the ontology of the border itself. For this purpose, Derrida's concept of 'hostipitality' is mobilized as the author claims that 'the autoimmune logic of hostipitality' (p. 147) offers an affirmative paradigm of the border by deconstructing key dichotomies, for example, violence/agency or death/life, while acknowledging the risk of thanatopolitical and zoopolitical drifts.

Nick Vaughan-Williams builds upon the well-known contributions of Foucault, Agamben, Derrida and Esposito, but his reading and elaborations yield innovative insights for future works in the field of border and migration studies. The book has the potential to initiate new conversations among critical scholars; here I develop one point to feed into the discussion on 'affirmative borders', but the book's scope and density promise to contribute to various conversations emerging from different locations.

The author emphasizes the need 'to recalibrate the relationship between thanatopolitical and affirmative potentialities' (p. 147), and one way he proposes doing so is through an 'alternative rendering of alterity' that would 'see the self as "contaminated", albeit in a positive way' (p. 148). The author asserts the positive potential of such an 'affirmative contamination' for a re-conceptualization of Europe, and thus of European borders, in order to offer a framework that could address border violence and improve 'irregular' migrants' lives through better safeguards. Amongst the concrete policy measures that the author suggests are the reversal of trend to externalize the European border security, and the opening up of legal channels for labour migration (p. 150). Such practical suggestions would certainly alleviate the violence experienced by 'irregular' migrants as a result of current border practices. What is more, the theoretical framework that the author explores and constructs throughout the book undeniably contributes to thinking through the paradox between the vitalist and lethal dimensions of border practices that serves as a starting point to the book. However, I would argue that racism as a key operational concept is downplayed in the reading the author proposes. While

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Nick Vaughan-Williams, following Foucault, stresses that 'the category of race is an essential element of biopolitics and allows for killing to become acceptable under biopolitical conditions' (p. 42), he arguably does not fully take into account the analytical implications of this statement. This is seen when he over-emphasizes the vitalist dimension of Foucault's biopolitics, suggesting an opposition between the Foucauldian biopolitical paradigm and Agamben's thanatopolitics. Racism as 'the precondition for exercising the right to kill' (Foucault, 1976/2003) deserves greater analytical attention, I believe, in relation to the way the book engages with thanatopolitics. The author briefly acknowledges the contributions of postcolonial thought and refers to Frantz Fanon's work when he mentions 'the animalization of the colonized' (p. 72) and 'the colonial attempt to produce the native as a sub-species' (p. 90), drawing parallels with the 'zoopower' exerted in some detention spaces. On the whole, however, racism occupies a marginal role in the analysis and thus fails to be addressed in the author's conceptualization of 'affirmative borders'. I would argue that, for an 'alternative rendering of alterity' (p. 148) to be meaningful, centre-staging the operation of racism within biopolitical border practices is essential to the theoretical enterprise undertaken by Nick Vaughan-Williams. For an alternative – and inclusive rather than exclusive – construction of the 'Other' to emerge, for the idea of 'positive contamination' to have bearing on how borders are conceptualized, racism needs to be central to the analysis of the paradox at the heart of this book, rather than included as yet another dimension of biopolitical governance.

The book is a must read for critical scholars engaging with biopolitical frameworks of analysis in relation to border enforcement and migration. By addressing the paradox of biopolitical border policies that have thanatopolitical effects, or in other words, of the co-option of the humanitarian discourse by the political powers implementing border enforcement, Nick Vaughan-Williams creatively addresses a pressing theoretical issue that bears fundamental empirical implications for 'irregular' migrants. My very brief discussion of one of the author's arguments hopefully serves as an invitation to read the book and to develop various scholarly conversations within the field of critical border and migration studies on the basis of the conceptualizations proposed by the author.

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In this monograph, Tahir Zaman, affiliated to the School of Law & Social Sciences, University of East London, has interwoven several uncommon perspectives on migration and religion in the Middle East: he starts with a general review of Islamic traditions of refuge and sanctuary (chapter 1), and moves on to a historic and generational view of the current refugee crisis in Iraq and Syria. While chapters 2 and 3 deal with the historic events in Iraq, chapters 4 and 5 elaborate on Iraqi refugees in Syria. The last chapter asks the question, 'Syrian Sanctuary? Finding Continuities between the Iraqi and Syrian Displacement Crises.' The conceptual framework is based on a qualitative analysis, which includes participant observations and narrative interviews, Pierre Bourdieu's terminology of the religious field, the habitus, and diverse forms of symbolic and social capital. The time of his field-study spans mostly fall of 2010 to spring of 2011; that is, shortly before the Arab Spring in Syria, and the civil war that followed, led to the mass displacement of hundreds of thousands of Syrians and Iraqi refugees in Syria. Most of the interviews were conducted in Damascus.

Zaman's sensitivity and interest in dealing with religious identities of displaced people in the Middle East comes probably from his own background. He is the child of refugees from the Kashmir region who migrated to Great Britain. Currently, he is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging (CMRB) at the University of East London, and a Senior Teaching Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

The locus of how the historic events, religious identities, and ethnicities play out in the biographies of different generations is well chosen; in particular, the exploitation and instrumentalization of religion in Ba'athist Iraq (chapter 2) and the consequences of sectarian violence (chapter 3: 'The Un-mixing of Neighborhoods: Iraq on the Eve of Displacement"). It reveals the full scale of tragedy, underlined also by choosing the Palestinian-Iraqi Community Association in Mukhayyam Al-Yarmouk as a research site and Palestinian-Iraqis as interlocutors in Syria; reminding us that the displacement of Palestinians from their original territory in 1949 and their resettlement in Iraq constitutes part of the current crises. Furthermore, he draws the reader's attention (including me, as a 'Western-reader') to the fact that foreign influence (principally the U.S. occupation in Iraq) has triggered the Sunni-Shi'i divide, including the establishment of militias and the Islamic State. We have seen something similar in Afghanistan, where ethnic-religious divisions only gained strength after the West imposed a certain model of government on Afghan society. One wonders, when reading the commentaries of Iraqi refugees in Syria, what became of these people after the spring of 2011. Were they able to flee again and seek refuge in Turkey or Europe? It leaves a bitter aftertaste, when thinking that Iraqi refugees are now refugees for the second time and Palestinian-Iraqis even for the third time, victims of forced migration and war.

By intersecting the themes of religion and migration, Zaman has chosen a fairly new approach in that religion and religious identities have received very little systematic attention in the field of migration studies. This is surprising, especially in the field of migration and Middle Eastern studies, since faith is a vital component of many people's lives and guides their action. Religious identities and movements have also played a large role in the region; for example, the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq war, and the Ba'athist faith campaign (*ḥamla al-īmāniye*) – major incidents and state policies that Zaman mentions. Zaman's view on religion is a positive one, linking it with the notion of agency. He sees religious identities as part of the solution to the plight of refugees and not part of the problem (p. 41). Sentences and arguments that Zaman repeats throughout the book include, 'Religion must be recognized as a social and cultural resource that enables the project of emplacement or home-making' (p. 42) and 'religion is fundamentally concerned with the nurturing of relationships' (p. 162). Yet, while this perspective is certainly valid because it draws attention to the much neglected positive role of religious values for the majority of Muslims (such as hospitality and solidarity), it cannot be overlooked that religious identities are also a part of the problem when instrumentalized by violent actors such as the militias, who claim to act out of religious motives; or the other actors motivated by political, social, or economic concerns.

Zaman's last point involves the role of faith-based actors, such as FBOs (faith-based organizations) and NGOs (non-governmental organizations), in the refugee crises of Iraq and Syria. In chapter

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4, he discusses the role of these groups in Syria and (in the last chapter) in Turkey; although this is not evident from the chapter title. By including the UNHCR (the United Nations Refugee Agency) in his analysis, Zaman is able to show that often the interests of institutional actors are not in sync with those of the refugees, even worsening the conditions under which the Iraqi refugees live in Syria and Turkey; they are based on international law in the case of the UNHCR, or, in the case of organizations, the collaboration with the Syrian and Turkish states. The examples that Zaman includes clearly indicate that whenever the refugees are able to build their own community organizations, and negotiate their own needs with broader social and political forces, then the constructive and positive ways of religiously motivated action allow them to construct a home in inhospitable surroundings.

Overall, the book connects a wide set of themes and issues. Unfortunately, it does not always do it in a systematic way. For instance, when reading the last chapter, which promises 'Finding Continuities between the Iraqi and Syrian Displacement Crises,' the reader is left with the impression that the author wants to give an update on how the crisis has unfolded in the broader region, including in Turkey, since 2011, rather than laying forth a comprehensive analysis. Loose accounts and information on several faith-based organizations that operate in the region illustrate this shortcoming. In my view, it would have been better to put this chapter under a different title and to include an epilogue that picks up on the lessons learned from the crises of displaced people in Iraq and Syria. This would have made it easier for the reader to integrate all the information dealing with the two authoritarian regimes and the many cultural-religious aspects shared by Iraq and Syria. Nevertheless, for all who are interested in the origins of the mass displacement of Iraqis, the lived experiences of refugees, and their religious identities, this book is recommended.

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Notes

1. The title in English: *The Family Reunification. Who can get a family to Finland, who cannot and why is that?* The English translation is made by the reviewer.
2. The title in English: *Russian-speakers in Finland: the Future Finns*. The English translation is made by the reviewer.
3. A war memorial in the city centre of Tallinn for all Soviet soldiers who fought and fell in WWII to defeat fascism. The removal of the memorial by Estonian government in 2007 from its original location caused a revolt among Estonian Russians and is thereafter known as The Bronze Soldier Crises.

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