

McAllister, K.E., Yoshizmizu, A. and Ahadi, D. (eds.): **Migration and the Politics of Methodology. Doing fieldwork, decentring power, and foregrounding migrants' perspectives.** London, Routledge, 2025. 289 p.

In their book *Migration and the Politics of Methodology. Doing fieldwork, decentring power, and foregrounding migrants' perspectives*, the three editors, Kirsten Emiko McAllister, Ayaka Yoshizmizu, and Daniel Ahadi give a unique review of migration studies for those outside the field. The volume draws on micro-level perspectives as core qualitative methods to explore how migrants negotiate the process of resettlement experiences and reconstruct their identity in societies that are often marked by exclusionary and hostile attitudes toward newcomers.

McAllister and her colleagues edited a fresh compilation of studies that provides seminal critical analysis of the methodological and ethical challenges in migration research. The book explores the central question of whether traditional research methods often reproduce the power hierarchies that position migrants as vulnerable or passive subjects of observation. Through the eleven chapters the book reconfigures fieldwork as an active space of political and ethical engagement that prioritises migrant subjectivities and dismantles academic power asymmetries.

The book showcases experimental methodologies designed to break through the limitations of

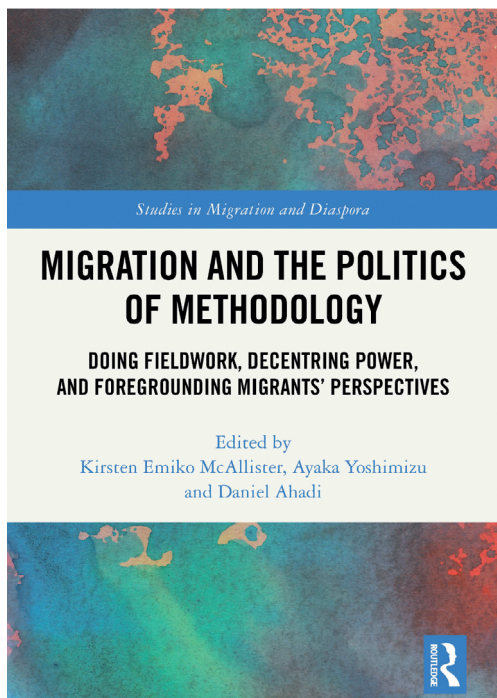
traditional qualitative interviews. When asked to recount their experiences, through digital storytelling, migrants emphasise absolute trauma or flawless economic productivity. Contributors also use auto-ethnography blurring the line between researcher and interviewee.

The diversity of fieldworks also adds new layers to the analysis. Canadian, Scottish, Japanese, Ecuadorian and Uruguayan cases are presented through various community- and/or place-based research approaches, focusing on the feeling of exclusion or the (re-)created and (re-)interpreted space of the home. The book uniquely demonstrates how emerging trends in migration studies are shifting the focus away from traditional research topics – such as the role of nation-states, multilateral organizations, international students, labour force needs, citizenship, training programmes – towards the conditions of migrants' lives, lack of rights, exploitation, racialization and efforts to create liveable conditions and mobilise for rights.

It is important to consider the disciplinary context of this work. This volume is largely shaped by the scholarly perspectives of contributors working within the fields of Communication, Media and Cultural Studies. The diversity of the collaborators guarantees the above mentioned new methodological approaches.

The edited book is divided into three thematic parts concerning various methodological aspects of doing fieldwork about, with, or as migrants. The first section (*Part Section I*) examines community-based research projects grounded in feminist ethnography and intercultural engagement, illustrating the unequal power structures that influence the lives and experiences of underprivileged rural migrant workers (*Chapter 1: Decentring Media and Recentring People*, by Siyuan Yin), discrimination, prejudices and obstacles to integration into the host society (*Chapter 2: Building Solidarity between Im/migrants and the Local Population*, by Jorge Frozzini), expressions of uncertainty, memories of loss and displacement, and new beginning in an unfamiliar place (*Chapter 3: The Tayybeh Turn*, by Adel Iskandar), and further exploring alternative expressions of well-being (*Chapter 4: Embodying Affective Fieldwork with Internal Migrant Women in Ecuador*, by Belen Febres-Cordero).

The second section (*Part Section II*) is concerned with the complex power dynamics of research where contributors examine how they struggle with the operation of power in their research. Widely shared ethical principles of Migration Studies are concerned in this volume, such as the respect of autonomy of participants, the anonymity, the responsibility to



avoid harm or the importance of benefits and burdens of research. This section presents contributions made in the field of forced migration (*Chapter 5: Responsible to Whom?*, by Erin Goheen GLANVILLE), rail-hailing services (*Chapter 6: Criminalizing “Chinese” Ethnic Ride-Hailing*, by Yijia ZHANG), and asylum seekers and community-based art projects (*Chapter 7: Researching Asylum Seekers and Community-Based Art as an “Ethnographic Outsider”*, by Kirsten Emiko McALLISTER).

In the third section (*Part Section III*), spatial dynamics are discussed via the role of fieldwork, power and embodiment, prompting us to rethink how we negotiate and understand transnational and national spaces. Contributors of this section fulfil a dual role: as migrants, the active acknowledgement of the researchers’ lived experiences in the migration process is the key element of this section. Whether conducting research in a country where they live as immigrant researchers, or in a diasporic community in which they share the same ancestry, or returning to their ancestral homeland as a first-generation or second-generation diasporic researcher (*Chapter 8: Walking in the South*, by Marcos MOLDES, and *Chapter 9: Re-Imagining Migration and Communication Studies through Fieldwork in Transnational Yokohama*, by Ayaka YOSHIMIZU) the researcher’s own experience – of being an outsider or an immigrant, and of being regarded as “other” in terms of race, language, and epistemology – significantly shapes how they approach migration research.

MOLDES, M. presents the embodied experience as a second-generation returnee (in Uruguay) exploring the complexity of belonging and non-belonging in his ancestral homeland (in *Chapter 8*). Through the embodied practice of walking, the author illustrates how emotions such as shame and a sense of non-belonging become inscribed in space, shaping the ways places are experienced and stigmatised. Such ethnographic place-making processes can be understood as destabilizing practices that unsettle established forms of connection, attachment, and belonging.

As a first-generation immigrant, YOSHIMIZU, A. re-imagines Yokohama as a diasporic city (in *Chapter 9*). Immigrants’ knowledge of and engagement with the host city challenge the dominant conceptualization of transnational migrants as foreigners, outsiders, or temporary residents, instead revealing their integral role in the city’s diasporic place-making. Her research vividly illustrates the reflexive nature of ethnographic research, showing that the research process not only generates knowledge about the field but also reshapes the researcher’s own perceptions. Consequently, she interprets the city in which the fieldwork was conducted in new and different ways.

MARQUES, Â.C.S. and HERNÁNDEZ, E.B.R. examine how Cuban migrants created transnational bonds

with their homeland through digital and place-based practices and transformed their identities in Canada (*Chapter 10: Not Just Immigrants*, by Ângela Cristina Salgueiro MARQUES and Elisa Beatriz Ramírez HERNÁNDEZ). Michel FOUCAULT’s notion of heterotopia provides a framework for understanding how Cuban migrants transformed their lives and how they assimilated to the various cultures of their host city. The concept of heterotopia enables us to reflect on the reality of social space created by migrants through their conceptions of the places they create, places that offer them refuge whilst simultaneously reshaping their relationships within both the host society and their society of origin. This study presents how a graffiti or a tattoo can be regarded as the centre or heart of a migrant community or tell a story to create a narrative on one’s migration history and identity.

Finally, AHADI, D. examines how racialised migrants are excluded from a space constructed for white settlers in Canada (*Chapter 11: Unpacking “Go back to Where You Came from...”*, by Daniel AHADI). The study foregrounds the existence of hegemonic whiteness, as a dominant culture, which exclude, segregate and discriminate those labelled as “Others” resulting imbalanced power.

The book *Migration and the Politics of Methodology* was also published in line with #Communication-SoWhite movement which brought to the forefront the institutional and ideological biases that arise when critical analysis stops at issues of class and gender, and devalues the views of researchers who are subject to racial discrimination and indigenous researchers when determining the field’s research priorities.

Throughout the volume, contributors show that critical and reflexive forms of fieldwork challenge state- and institution-centred agendas by placing migrants at the heart of social justice projects, thus underscoring that fieldwork constitutes not only a method of inquiry but also a transformative political and ethical practice.

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