Introduction to the *Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration*
Katharyne Mitchell, Reece Jones and Jennifer L. Fluri

Why critical geographies of migration? We felt that while there are currently a number of excellent monographs on migration, there are few edited volumes that are focused on the geographies of migration with a specifically critical lens. Our aims for the *Handbook* are to develop an exciting new introduction to critical migration research that draws on the work of leading scholars in the field, to offer a comprehensive overview of key themes in spatial and geographical scholarship in migration, and to highlight a range of ideas, methods, and regions in migration research, while remaining attuned to the underlying politics that brings critical scholars together. Along with perennial issues of relevance such as the shifting nature of borders, camps, and refugee management, some emergent thematic areas include the impact of new technologies on forms of communication and systems of surveillance and mapping, as well as a heightened focus on embodiment and affective practices. Other threads include the changing nature of humanitarian aid and its implications for refugee governance and political activism, and the new ways that time is calculated and experienced vis-à-vis detention, waiting, and local and transnational forms of im/mobility. In each of these areas, contributors bring a renewed focus on spatial analysis and geographical context.

Migration and borders are central issues in academic debates around the state and the nation but, in recent years, they have also come to dominate public debates about identity and justice in the era of globalization. The so-called European migration crisis of 2015 raised global attention to the issue of violent borders, but countries around the world had been hardening their edges for decades. New walls, more sophisticated surveillance technology, additional border agents, and stricter immigration laws have been implemented in countries as diverse as Australia, Botswana, Thailand, and the United States.

On the one hand, there are more people on the move today than in previous decades. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that in 2017 there were over 68 million people displaced by conflict, the highest number ever recorded (UNHCR, 2018). In response, across Europe and North America, anti-immigrant political parties rallied their supporters with stories of migrant crime, cultural change, and lost jobs, echoing the anti-immigrant language of nativists for generations. In the United States, the same timeworn, and false, claims of the civilizational threat posed by immigration was used by the Know Nothings of the 1850s, the Chinese exclusion campaigners of the 1880s, and the supporters of national origins quotas in the 1920s. The effectiveness of anti-immigrant organizing was evident in the 2016 Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, in the consolidation of power by right-wing governments in Hungary, Poland, and Austria, in the election of an anti-immigrant coalition in Italy, and in the rise of Donald Trump in the United States whose campaign was launched by attacking immigrants as rapists, murders, and criminals (Kopan, 2016).
On the other hand, despite the media and political circus, the total number of irregular migrant arrivals in the European Union (EU) and North America remains relatively modest. Even in the unusual year of 2015, there were only 1.3 million new asylum applications in the EU, which was double the previous year’s total of 626,000, but represents only a tiny fraction of the EU’s total population of over 500 million people. It was also fewer than the 2 million legal immigrants who arrived in the EU during the same period (Eurostat, n.d.). In the United States, despite the global increase in the number of people displaced by conflict, irregular arrivals have declined substantially since their peak around the dawn of the new millennium. In 2000, the US Border Patrol made 1.68 million apprehensions but by 2017 it was only 310,000 (US Border Patrol, 2017). None of the top ten countries hosting refugees are located in Europe or North America (UNHCR, 2017).

The contribution scholars have made to these debates is to contextualize and historicize the contemporary moment. Rather than accepting the overheated rhetoric about migration and borders, critical geographers of migration have mapped out the geography of contemporary migration and have situated it within the fabric of the larger political, economic, and social history. Scholars have provided the data to demonstrate that today’s migrations are not unique but instead have echoes in past mass migrations that were driven by economic restructuring and demographic changes. In the nineteenth century, Europe was at the center of another mass migration, but then the continent sent people around the world as agricultural lands were enclosed and the urban slum populations of London and Manchester grew. From 1815 to 1915, 30 million migrants from Europe arrived in the United States.

In order to understand the causes of contemporary migration, scholars have emphasized the role of past colonial economic exploitation and political meddling by European and North American states in many of the migrant-sending countries. Many of the borders that cross over historical, cultural, or political groups in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East were drawn by Europeans as they left behind their colonial claims. These deep histories shape today’s migrations. Finally, critical scholars have also highlighted the geopolitics and geoeconomics behind the emergence of a border security industry that profits from the deep pockets of states interested in managing and directing migrant flows through the construction of walls, the deployment of larger security forces, and the creation of a vast network of camps to detain people on the move. The contributions here tell these stories by drawing on detailed field research that is situated within the academic literature and on the ground experience of contemporary migration.

Some of these situated stories involve humanitarian efforts on behalf of migrants, including the practices of aid workers and organizations at the border itself. Critical geographers interrogating the impact of humanitarianism question both the motivations and the impacts of these actions. Who is involved and what exactly does the presence of humanitarian actors do in specific contexts? While previous research in this area focused largely on the actions of inter-governmental organizations such as the UNHCR (cf. Hyndman, 2000), current critical work has considered a greater variety of organizations and actors. The operations of philanthropists, non-governmental organizations, nonprofits, local providers, and faith-based organizations are scrutinized for their roles in the migration ‘industry,’ as well as for the ways in which they may help to normalize violent border practices, inadequate forms of government care, or passivity among recipients. Contemporary work on humanitarianism thus enlarges the frame, enabling new ways of
seeing the relationship between philanthropic actors, aid institutions, and migrants in the context of advanced capitalism, as well as the various ramifications of different forms of help. Additionally, the rapid increase in new kinds of humanitarian public-private partnerships and the rise of new forms of measurement and accountability is itself an important object of study, as neoliberal globalization shifts the terrain in which everyone must operate.

In addition to shifts in humanitarian partnerships and practices, geoeconomic considerations are also implicated in new experiences of the asylum system and detention, where many migrants have been forced to endure longer and longer periods of waiting, and of time that stretches out indefinitely with no hope of forward mobility. This kind of slow violence is manifested in refugee management systems globally, where hundreds of thousands of people remain trapped in various camps and prisons, perennially waiting for a resolution that never arrives. This form of purgatory is the new normal, evidence of a broken system, in which many nations are unwilling to formally withdraw from the 1951 Refugee Convention, yet at the same time, equally unwilling to provide the services needed to grant due process rights to asylum seekers. The passage of time, which used to be investigated more in relation to questions of integration and second generation advancement, is now frequently examined in terms of migrants’ experiences of entrapment and immobility such as these. Some migrants – from the Lampedusa in Hamburg activist group to the City Plaza squatters in Athens (see Mitchell and Sparke, 2018) – have taken up their own causes, fighting physically and publicly for their right to be part of their surroundings and to work and move and be educated. Others, such as several refugee children in Sweden, have reacted to their situation by completely giving up on life, going to bed and not getting up again for months or even years (Aviv, 2017). In both these cases, it is the lack of forward mobility, the profound stasis and sense of limbo, the passage of time and of life itself that the migrants are experiencing and challenging.

Feminist geographers have examined migration through the lens of gender, embodiment, and affect in an effort to draw attention to the physical and emotional experiences of migrants such as these. For example, Pratt’s (2012) extensive research on Philippine domestic workers in Canada illustrates in ethnographic detail the emotional and physical stress on female domestic laborers who are separated from their children. The division of families, often across several countries, remains an outgrowth of economic migration and therefore an increasing site of geographic analysis. Family divisions also occur across several countries and have developed into extensive multi-country diasporas, particularly for individuals from countries embroiled in protracted conflict such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and South Sudan. Disparate attempts to remain connected to family members or maintain cultural and national identities occur through extensive networks to ensure connectedness, which are often mitigated by a variety of gendered practices (Yeoh, 2016). Examinations of ‘embodied mobilities’ by geographers brings into focus the ways in which social categories and identities are interconnected and experienced by migrants in different locations (Sabhlok, 2017). In some geographic contexts one’s gender, race, language, or nationality may be an asset leading to job opportunities, while in others these identity markers may marginalize one from accessing resources. Additionally, age has become a focus of analysis, particularly the politicized vulnerability of children, such as unaccompanied minors and the geopolitics of care work (Swanson and Torres, 2016). Micro and intimate scales of migration and vulnerability are further examined through
analyses of transnational refugee processing centers that pathologize mental health experiences by way of bureaucratic processes that determine whether or not one is worthy of resettlement (Loyd et al., 2018). Thus, as feminist and other critical geography scholars have shown, examining micro-scale, embodied, and affective experiences of migration exposes compelling, complex, and often complicated narratives of mobility.

In Part I of the volume, we explore these new issues in critical migration research in key areas such as gender and violence as well as on borders, displacement, and questions of permanence and impermanence. These five chapters address disparate themes with an eye towards future developments in the field. In Chapter 1, for example, we learn about the siting of critical geographies of migration as Gilmartin and Kuusisto-Arponen theorize the importance of bringing geopolitical and biopolitical approaches together. Beginning with a discussion of the two most studied aspects of migration – the causes of migration and the effects of it – they go on to discuss how these early research foci led critical theorists to analyse not just causes but also restrictions to free movement (the geopolitical); additionally, they note how, alongside examining the effects of migration, critical geographers explore in greater depth the embodied experiences of migrants (the biopolitical), especially those who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. The authors then introduce critical border studies and studies on migrant bodies, highlighting the need to think about both the border and the body to gain a sufficiently holistic understanding of any given context. Looking to the future, Gilmartin and Kuusisto-Arponen argue for the necessity of critical migration scholarship that is reflexive of its ‘own omissions and contradictions,’ such as in the area of the classification of migrant bodies and experiences. While critical geographers have paid great attention to migrants living in conditions of economic precarity, for example, this has led to relatively less attention given to other forms of social differentiation, and to some of the ways that migrants are pitted against each other. The authors call for expanding our conceptualizations of both borders and bodies and ‘considering their connections with broader socio-spatial formations.’

In Chapter 2, Weima and Hyndman address some similar issues in their examination of displacement and the management regime of humanitarian governance. They argue that theories of migrant management are often too territorially static and state-centric – following too closely the geopolitical logic of the two key spatialities of exclusion, those of containment and securitization. Exploring the idea of transnational displacement enables new ways of conceptualizing alternative frameworks of both humanitarian management and migrant agency. An alternative view of migrant mobility and geographic circularity alleviates the territorial trap, allowing for greater understandings of the various types of ‘ruptures and sutures of displacement, return, and return again’ experienced by so many migrants. In examining the transnational movements and networks of migrants, the authors see and articulate the multiple ways that refugees negotiate their own paths of safety and security within a broader system of humanitarian governance and the zones of violence and insecurity in which all operate.

In Chapter 3, Menjívar and Walsh attend to women’s experiences of physical violence in Central America along with the structural forms of violence that both compel and impede migration. They link the continuation of violence in the wake of the extensive history of US intervention in Latin America with contemporary decisions to escape violence through migration abroad. Endemic poverty has become an outgrowth of entrenched violence, which has had disproportionately negative effects on Central American spaces,
economies, and societies as compared to the United States. The authors intricately illustrate the interconnected links between structural, criminal, and political violence with gender-based violence. In many cases gender-based violence remains a compelling reason to migrate. However, the process of migrating, particularly to the United States, is further marked by sexual violence, which is predominantly experienced by female migrants. Many women endure multiple forms of violence throughout their journey as well as additional layers of structural and bureaucratic violence at the border and in US detention facilities. Women who seek asylum in the United States are faced with an uneven and often unjust system, which is difficult to navigate and often re-traumatizes victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Menjívar and Walsh explicate the difficulties experienced by female migrants by analysing inequities through the lens of ‘legal violence.’ Their chapter provides an innovative approach to understanding the multiple layers of gender-based violence and migration from the bodies of women to the scale of institutions that should protect vulnerable persons but often perpetuate structural and physical violence.

In Chapter 4, Timothy Raeymaekers theorizes how the dislocation of borders through externalization and internalization of border work challenges our notion of migrant mobility. He contends that these new configurations of border policing at locations far from the line itself create new spaces of enforcement and politics of mobility. Raeymaekers argues for an embodied analytics that considers the structured agency produced through new tensions between displacement and enforcement, sovereignty and governmentality, and negation and negotiation of rights; and illustrates these new spaces, politics, and tensions through an analysis of changes to the migration regime in Italy since 2011. Benjamin Muller delves into the technologies employed by states to track the movement of people in Chapter 5. In this chapter Muller defines the biometric border and explains the history of the technologies that have transformed how bodies pass through border spaces and how agents of the state decide which of those bodies will receive further scrutiny. He argues that the use of biometric data at the border is only one aspect of a larger trend towards the biometric state that uses data to monitor the population. Mountains of data about individuals from commerce, through the use of mobile devices, and through internet searches allows for the creation of profiles and categories that border agencies use to prescreen many travelers before they even reach the border line. Therefore, Muller argues that biometric borders are ‘instrumental facilitators in the proliferation and permanence of this discretionary sovereign power.’

Part II of the volume, entitled ‘Corporeal and Gendered Geographies of Migration,’ emphasizes the body and gender as central to analyses of disparate patterns of migration. Gender provides a lens through which to examine the multiple and intersecting identities, such as race, ethnicity, religion, caste, class, and social status, which influence individual reasons for and experiences of migration (Hyndman, 2010). Analyses of migration at the scale of the body explicates critical geographies of migration through intimate experiences and practices that elucidate the multiple influences on decision making as well as the processes, flows, difficulties, and politics associated with this form of mobility (Kuusisto-Arponen and Gilmartin, 2015). While economic opportunity remains a clear motivating factor for many forms of migration, feminist geographers have shown that other social dynamics, such as status, religion, citizenship, caste, class, and of course gender roles/relations have been significant motivators for migrants (Pratt, 2012; Silvey 2003, 2004; Yeoh et al., 2005). Additionally, gendered migration takes several different
forms. Some situations and locations encourage male migration, while female migration is more encouraged in other contexts (Silvey, 2006). States seeking tax remittances have implemented campaigns to encourage labor migration, while other states seek foreign laborers to address shortfalls in their domestic labor force. Forced migration such as individuals fleeing conflict is discussed through the lens of geopolitics, citizenship, and liminal spaces (also see Ashutosh and Mountz, 2011; Ehrkamp, 2017).

Chapters 7 and 8 examine circular forms of labor migration throughout Asia (Chapter 7) and within India (Chapter 8). Chapters 6, 9, and 10 examine vulnerability, agency, embodiment, and gender through the lens of forced migration and flight from conflict zones. These chapters analyse the spatial, social, and situational complexities of migration from unaccompanied minors in Europe (Chapter 6), to the ways in which trauma has become a geopolitical method for determining legible and legitimate asylum cases (Chapter 9) and the multifarious, continual, and often circular migrations of individuals from Afghanistan over the course of nearly 40 years of sustained political conflict (Chapter 10).

In Chapter 6, Kuusisto-Arponen and Gilmartin examine embodied experiences of migration and geographies of care through an analysis of unaccompanied minors in Europe, with a specific focus on Finland. They analyse embodied migration and geographies of care through three interrelated classifications. First, they examine the processes of creating a sense of belonging. Second, they explicate the material, spatial, and psycho-social systems of care relations. The authors identify the need for psychosocial support for unaccompanied minors, and the importance of accepting their agency and abilities. They call for new modes of interaction between unaccompanied minors and caregivers that assist children with cultivating their agency rather than treating them as ‘victims or passive beneficiaries.’ They further challenge institutional assumptions that stress belonging as territorially bound, and suggest more interaction among students from various countries including young people from the host country. Third, the authors argue for more analytical attention to translocal and transcultural experiences of unaccompanied minors and how they develop a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging for many minors develops through cross-cultural relationships with children from different home countries but similar experiences of displacement and resettlement in Finland. The authors argue that transcultural ties need to be ‘recognized and deemed worthy of acknowledgement’ from adult caregivers in institutionalized settings.

In Chapter 7, Yeoh, Wee, and Goh highlight the gendered and embodied experiences of temporary labor migrants in Asia. International migration within Asia continues to grow as several countries seek temporary and foreign-born laborers to work within various economic sectors, from construction to housekeeping. This chapter highlights the temporary-ness of migration patterns in Asia. Several countries (i.e., Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) in response to low fertility rates and rising quality of life and life expectancy seek foreign workers to fill jobs that are identified as ‘dirty, difficult, and dangerous.’ Additionally, countries seek laborers who are flexible and temporary by initiating policies that make it difficult, if not impossible, for migrant laborers to settle permanently. By focusing on the body as a primary site of analysis, the authors elucidate the intimate and emotional experiences of transient work and transnational family life. They further identify how bodies are gendered at the border and in relation to work. For example, women’s care work is often valorized while their reproductive abilities
become scrutinized as sites of surveillance, such as in Singapore where female migrants in low-wage jobs are subject to medical screenings and deported if they become pregnant.

In Chapter 8, Anu Sabhlok examines the internal migration of construction workers in India. She emphasizes the circular and cyclical patterns of this form of temporary work, its links to nationalist discourse, and the disparate constructions of laborer masculinity. Masculinity in this context is spatial and differentially performed during one’s journey to the work site, labor at the work site, and upon his return home. Her chapter carefully charts the arduous journey male temporary laborers take to reconstruct India’s northern border roads. The roads have become both material and symbolic representations of Indian nationalism, while the physical and mentally difficult work, and dangerous work conditions experienced by the laborers remain invisible. Thus, she explains the ways in which citizenship is differentially and hierarchically applied, privileging the citizens who will traverse these roads and the soldiers that monitor them, over the laborers who build and rebuild them each summer.

In Chapter 9, Ehrkamp, Loyd, and Secor theoretically and empirically extend existing analyses of corporeal geographies of migration by focusing on the geopolitics of trauma experienced by Iraqi refugees. Their research identifies the ways in which post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has become a ubiquitous diagnostic tool for what they identify as ‘trauma practices.’ They show how diagnosing PTSD among refugees can pathologize them and create a ‘refugee condition.’ By following the multiple layers of bureaucracy and institutionalized frameworks for managing refugee trauma, the authors illustrate how trauma becomes quantified, calculated, and categorized. They further remind readers that only a small fraction of all forcibly displaced persons are recognized by the UNHCR. In order to be recognized individuals must undergo extensive screenings, protocols, and interviews to determine if they have a ‘credible fear of future persecution.’ Once this process has been completed refugees continue on a more uncertain path towards asylum and resettlement, which requires additional medical screenings, interviews, and legal procedures, which often drag on for years. The authors explicate how identifying and classifying relational trauma resonates geopolitically. For example, requiring refugees to retell traumatic events in order to seek asylum in the United States both reflects geopolitical events and has the potential to ‘remake political geographies.’ The authors provide a detailed narrative to explain how storytelling identifies traumatic events and places them temporally in the past, while the lingering memories and corporeal experiences continue to affect individuals in their daily life.

In Chapter 10, Bagheri and Fluri address flight from conflict by examining the multiple and cyclical migrations of Afghans regionally and to western countries, centering on the United States. This chapter provides a historical overview of the various phases of conflict in Afghanistan and subsequent waves of migration to neighboring countries, Iran and Pakistan. The gendering of migration in this chapter focuses on changing gender roles and relations mitigated by migration, and the laws and expectations of host countries. For example, in Iran, inter-national marriages between Iranian men and Afghan women are automatically legitimate and children from this union receive citizenship. Conversely, marriages between Afghan men and Iranian women must receive approval from the state and if they are not legitimated, children from this union are not granted citizenship. Masculinity is often measured by Afghan migration experiences, where travel for work in Iran is viewed as a right of passage and process of becoming a man within one’s
home community. Afghan migration experiences in Pakistan have been diverse based on expected affiliations with disparate resistance factions and the political configuration and management of different refugee camps, from feminist to Islamic extremist. The authors also include migration and mobility practices of Afghans – motivated by economic opportunity rather than flight from conflict – by discussing extensive economic networks among individuals in the diaspora. The chapter concludes by examining cyclical migration patterns of Afghans regionally and in the United States, which pushes against mainstream assumptions that moving to the United States provides greater physical and economic security.

The corporeal and gendered geographies of migration discussed in each chapter in this part provide a micro-scale lens through which to interpret massive macro-scale processes, procedures, and pressures to migrate. Time is a key component of several chapters in this part as experiences of migration are often cyclical, circular, and constrained by time-horizons directed by states and employers rather than individual migrants.

Part III of the volume, entitled ‘Borders, Violence and the Externalization of Control,’ focuses on the experience of people on the move as they encounter the increasingly hardened and militarized edges of the state. Over the past 30 years, countries around the world built dozens of border walls, expanded border security budgets, deployed new surveillance technologies, and hired thousands of new agents (Andersson, 2014; Jones, 2016; Jones and Johnson, 2016; Vallet, 2014). These expansive new security practices at borders have transformed border landscapes from liminal and remote edges of state authority into legible and governed state spaces where agents gain firmer control over movement (Ferdoush, 2018). The result of the hardening of borders has been changes in migration routes as easier crossings in urban areas are closed down and new corridors have emerged, often in more dangerous locations in remote deserts or across dangerous bodies of water (Jones et al., 2017). The global media attention to migration pushed many governments to reformulate border control in an effort to further disrupt migration routes to prevent people from even reaching the edges of the state (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015).

The chapters in this part delve into the present moment of hardened borders and immigration controls by documenting the impact of border security on migration journeys, theorizing the efforts to control migration in distant locations well beyond the edges of the state, and reconfiguring how we understand the relationship between development, humanitarianism, and border security.

In Chapter 11, Slack and Martínez examine the grisly relationship between expanded border security and the increase in deaths at borders. They focus on the seeming paradox at the United States-Mexico border where the rate of migrant deaths is increasing even as the US Border Patrol reports steep declines in apprehensions at the border. The authors break migrant deaths down into two categories: those who die at the border due to increased security forcing them over more rugged and dangerous terrain and those that do not even make it to the border, but pass away en route through Mexico. The authors also contextualize the complexities of naming and counting migrant deaths, which is fraught with ambiguity and can be perceived as exploiting the individual’s suffering for political or academic benefit. They conclude that despite the discomfort inherent in talking about an individual’s death, the policy implications are significant and require more research and discussion of the ‘linkages between (im)mobility, violence, and death’ at increasingly militarized borders. Therefore, it is important to count migrant deaths
also to humanize them by thinking of each as a person who had dreams and aspirations and with a family left behind who is mourning their loss.

In Chapter 12, Van Houtum and Bueno Lacy analyse how maps of undocumented migration developed by the European border agency Frontex create a particular narrative of threat and enforcement. The authors deconstruct the map by considering the work done by its constituent parts of grids, arrows, and frames to argue that the map not only reproduces a nativist discourse of migration but exacerbates it by visually creating an image of invasion that does not exist in practice. The map erases the vulnerability and insecurity of people on the move and replaces it with the perception of vulnerability and insecurity for the people of Europe, in the process manufacturing a threat that requires further militarization and securitization of the borders of the European Union.

Michael Collyer investigates the connections between development aid and migration in Chapter 13. For decades, wealthy countries have thought of development aid as a mechanism to keep the poor in place by improving economic conditions in order to deter migration. These efforts generally fail because they misunderstand the relationship between development and migration. It is often not the poorest of the world who migrate. Instead, research suggests that, up to a point, increasing wealth in a country also increases migration as people have the means to make a longer journey and the knowledge of what opportunities might exist on the other end of the endeavor (Clemens and Postel, 2018). Collyer finds that as development as a means of dissuading migration has failed, many countries are turning to more coercive and violent means to prevent the movement of others.

In Chapter 14, Garelli and Tazzioli delve further into the uncomfortable connections between humanitarian aid work and border militarism by focusing on migration in the Mediterranean Sea. The authors emphasize the spatiality of migration policing by arguing that new policies criminalizing aid work by migrant rescue ships, new zones of operation by military and coast guard patrols, and renewed crackdowns on smuggling networks create new geographies of migration and enforcement in the Mediterranean. The authors conclude by proposing new research agendas in light of the military-humanitarian nexus in the governance of refugees and migration into the European Union.

Casas-Cortes and Cobarrubias provide a genealogy of the geographic imaginaries that underpin the externalization of border controls in the European Union in Chapter 15. Border externalization is a key facet of how the European Union, the United States, and Australia attempt to prevent people on the move from getting anywhere near the borders of the state. These efforts include direct funding to source and transit countries as well as military interventions to disrupt migration networks and routes. In this chapter, the focus is on how the spatial imaginary of border externalization is created, perpetuated, and enacted. Drawing on archival research, the chapter excavates a history of concentric circles of influence and control that shape how the European Union practices border externalization in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and beyond.

In Chapter 16, Kasparek and Schmidt-Sembdner use a case study of the village of Brennero on the Italian-Austrian border to analyse how internal policing for people on the move has evolved in the post-2015 era in the European Union. The authors introduce the concepts of the ‘ethnographic border and migration regime analysis’ and then use these tools to demonstrate how they form the context of the border enforcement regime at the Italian-Austrian border. The result is an illustration of how enforcement and migration create new configurations and peculiar political spaces within the European Union.
Part IV of the volume, entitled ‘Camps, Detention and Prisons,’ looks at different strategies of containment states engage in after they locate people on the move. As immigration enforcement budgets have increased in many wealthy states, there has been a simultaneous rise in the perceived need for detention facilities to house people without the proper documents to remain in a country. The news spaces produced by containment strategies have proved to be productive arenas for scholars to reconsider the relationships between the state, sovereignty, and the control of the mobility of subjects and non-subjects alike. These new spaces range from informal camps along new migration corridors to private prisons that funnel state dollars into corporate coffers as each migrant body generates more revenue. Other novel practices have also emerged including community detention, in which people are officially detained but allowed to live in society as long as they regularly report back to the authorities. In each of these instances, the idea of the border materializes in locations far from the actual borderline as the informal camps, prisons, and the bodies of migrants become the embodiment of the border of the state.

In Chapter 17, Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi analyse informal camps as quintessential spaces of modern migration. Scholars have long engaged with formal refugee camps, studying the organization of the space, the distribution of services, and the relations with neighboring host country officials and residents (Martin, 2015; Minca, 2005, 2015; Ramadan, 2013). The recent period of migration, however, has created new corridors of movement as many people avoid formal camps because they realize if they settle there, they could be stuck there for many years or even decades because the rate of third country resettlement is very low (Mountz et al., 2013). Instead, many people have set out directly for their destination countries, which has resulted in many informal camps along the route, particularly at chokepoints where movement is slowed or even completely stopped. The authors focus on the jungle camp at Calais, France, and argue that the informality of these camps is a critical space for scholars to consider within the larger context of migration.

In Chapter 18, Kate Coddington describes Australia’s ‘border continuum’ strategy that attempts to deter, divert, and detain people on the move before they reach Australia’s shores. Australia’s aggressive interventions in migration routes and its offshore detention facilities in Nauru and Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, have resulted in criticism from human rights groups, but also are often held up as a model by other governments attempting to crack down on movement. Coddington outlines the components of the program that attempt to shrink the scope of refugees’ ability to claim asylum, but also argues there are fissures in the border continuum that make visible the potential spaces for change.

Lauren Martin describes the links between the criminal justice system and migrant detention in the United States in Chapter 19. In the past, most people picked up on immigration violations in the United States were either released or immediately taken to the border with Mexico and returned. As immigration police forces have expanded through new Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement hires, there has been a similar growth in detention facilities. Martin describes the expanding pipeline between immigration policing, detention centers, and deportation to countries of origin. She concludes that these new detention practices are part of the broader strategy to ‘widen the net’ of containment and deportation for people on the move in the United States.

In Chapter 20, Robyn Sampson discusses alternatives to immigration detention. The author focuses on the emerging practice of community detention and analyses it through the lens of biopolitics and Agamben’s notion of the homo sacer. Sampson argues that the
embedding of individuals in a community, who are simultaneously under detention orders but also not physically confined, creates an embodied border that travels with them and can reconfigure their spatial experiences of belonging and home as their body hosts the border, and all of the exclusions it entails.

In Part V, entitled ‘Transnationalism and Diaspora,’ the focus is on the movement of people over the course of generations and in patterns that differ from and often defy conventional assumptions about migration ‘from’ one region ‘to’ another. Transnationalism generally refers to the possibilities of living bi-nationally, with actors moving and communicating across international divides on a fairly regular basis. It is conceptualized in terms of stretched social relations and multiple attachments, where migrant lives are understood to be formed in new kinds of intertwined spaces and worlds and where receiving and sending societies must be conceptualized in terms of a single field of analysis (Levitt and Sørenson, 2004). Diaspora likewise is concerned with questions of mobility over time, but more often explores the questions of individuals and populations living outside of or away from a perceived ‘homeland’ from which they are separated. This separation may be voluntary, but more often is understood as a form of exile, either real or imagined. The term thus evokes and questions notions of home and belonging, a politics of return, and place-based notions of identity.

Both concepts raise questions about political allegiance, cultural and performative expression, and emotional affinity, in addition to material concerns relating to development, citizenship, and the possibilities of economic integration. Furthermore, new technologies create new geographies, where the distances of prior eras shrink and shrink again with each passing decade. At the same time, new forms of media alter when and how information is processed and disseminated, shifting the timing of reactions to events far removed, but also the terms of national and regional debates and the emotional reactions to them.

For critical geographers these material and emotional questions of economic integration and development, cultural belonging and identity, and the politics of return are infused with a spatial set of inferences and logics. Contributors in this part examine all of these areas with different emphases, but always with a keen geographical eye and imagination. In Chapter 21, Blunt and Bonnerjee interrogate the dynamics of diaspora through a focus on the scale of the home. They examine how the experiences and understandings of home for people living in diaspora can be conceptualized in relation to a sense of diasporic home-making, urban belonging, and in the contested feelings of ‘homeland’ and diaspora. The investigation of the city as a site of diasporic attachment is particularly interesting for geographers because it provides a powerful analytical frame between the scale of the nation (homeland) and the domestic (see also Brickell and Datta, 2011; Oswin and Yeoh, 2010). It facilitates a view onto the specific processes of migrant incorporation and cultural interactions between differing actors on the ground, as well as the specific ways in which migrants participate in the production of urban space. Blunt and Bonnerjee conclude by bringing these analytical vantage points into dialogue with their own research on the experiences of diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities from Calcutta living in Toronto and London, arguing for views that highlight the ‘multi-scalarity of home and diaspora and the connections between them.’

In Chapter 22, Elizabeth Mavroudi looks at diaspora as a process, beginning with an analysis of the meanings of diaspora, and then focusing more closely on the performative
aspects of diaspora, including questions of timespace and representation. In this theoretical chapter, she helps the reader identify and critique concepts of diaspora that have been adopted by numerous scholars, arguing ultimately that conceptualizing diaspora as process enables a more ecumenical understanding of the term. ‘Rather than seek to close or box in, categorise, attribute characteristics to those in diaspora, the notion of process is more open and inclusive.’ Mavroudi’s geographical contribution rests in her further exploration of diaspora as process in performative timespace, where she brings in questions of time alongside those of space. She contends that the notion of timespace provides the possibility of capturing the experiences and feelings of those in diaspora in a more holistic manner.

In Chapter 23, Walton-Roberts, Crush, and Chikanda approach diasporas with more attention to their specific material effects, especially with respect to their capacity to contribute to national development. In this chapter, the authors investigate some of the repercussions of contemporary interest by many nation-states in harnessing the economic power of diasporic communities to boost national development agendas. They caution against an uncritical celebration of this type of diaspora engagement, however, showing some of the ways in which this new policy orthodoxy can lead to increased polarization of wealth in remittance-receiving areas, as well as increased forms of securitization of various diaspora groups. In conclusion, they put forward four intersecting issues they believe to be critical in any current research framing of diaspora; these include questions of the new economy, gender and identity, information technologies, and processes of marginalization.

In Chapter 24, Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho examines the affective practices of Chinese diasporic descendants in Myanmar. She focuses, in particular, on the ways in which emotions towards transnational migration play a significant role in not just the experience of belonging, but also in expressions of citizenship. Moreover, these experiences and expressions are even more profoundly connected to the constitution of political subjectivity through generations in the Chinese diasporic population. The chapter contributes to current debates on the political integration of transnational migrants and diasporic populations into nation-states over time. Whereas many scholars have analysed the impact of labor market opportunities or racism on immigrant integration, Ho’s research highlights a more elusive yet equally enduring factor: the long-term effects of emotional practices wherein diasporic residents ‘approximate’ the cultural values of citizenship in order to secure their community’s safety and belonging over time. These emotional practices produce a habitus, or way of life, that continues through the generations, and which is implicated in their expressions of political subjectivity.

In ‘Geographies of the next generation’ (Chapter 25), Kelly and Maharaj employ a spatial lens in analysing the outcomes for the children of immigrants in the United States and Canada. While acknowledging the vast sociological literature on second generation immigrants, they contend that there is still room for a more holistic spatial understanding of next generation outcomes. In this pursuit they propose three key spatialities: the role of place – specifically schools, neighborhoods, and cities; the importance of territory, in which they include legal questions and border regimes and how these impact labor market entry; and transnationalism – especially the impact of contemporary colonialisms that continue to negatively affect those identified as racial minorities in white-dominant societies. In each of these three spatialities, they delineate the ways that place shapes youth
outcomes in multiple ways, including education and employment. In conclusion, Kelly and Maharaj argue that a critical geographical perspective is essential for understanding the processes of second generation integration and the outcomes of youth development and wellbeing in every area of life.

In Chapter 26, Kok and Rogers demonstrate the importance of social media for migrants, for migration research, and for political outcomes connected to migration and diaspora. Drawing on the Rwandan diaspora's connections and use of Facebook, they contend that the uses of social media such as this have important political implications for national narratives – such as those of repatriation and return – and it is imperative for migration scholars to identify and pinpoint why, how, for what purposes, and with what effects these types of social media are being employed. In the chapter, Kok and Rogers note how concepts such as the ‘connected migrant’ (e.g., Diminescu, 2008) emphasize positive networked forms of mobility and social connectivity, including through digital technologies, but often omit the equally important questions related to how digital data collections might also be used by governments in political ways. In their work they call for a cross-fertilization of social media analysis and migration scholarship, indicating how ‘social media data may be used to study connected migration, and how migration research may benefit from relying on digital data for studying social and political inference.’

In the concluding part of the volume, entitled ‘Refugees, Asylum, Humanitarianism,’ we highlight work that explores the current configurations of actors, institutions, and events connected with humanitarian governance and refugees in the twenty-first century. This is a rapidly growing area of migration scholarship, one that investigates those individuals and institutions who aim to help, as well as those who are exploited, vulnerable and/or targeted as in need of help. In both of these categories questions of governance and agency are raised, as are broader implications about changes in the constitution of humanitarianism in the neoliberal era.

In Chapter 27, Steinhilper and Ataç contend that much of migration scholarship emphasizes refugees as passive victims or grateful receivers of liberal humanitarian handouts. By contrast, they focus on the voices, practices, and social movements of refugees in Austria and Germany, arguing that these types of self-organized activities are far more prevalent worldwide than generally acknowledged (cf. Mudu and Chattopadhyay, 2017). In their work, they draw on two case studies to explore the spatialities of refugee activism. In both cases, the refugee protest movements were shaped by mobility, place, and social space in ways that profoundly altered their trajectories. The specific spatial effects were most broadly connected to the ways in which refugees were able to escape from isolation and exclusion through their contentious strategies of visibility, voice, representation, and resistance. They used mobile tactics such as marches and bus tours, they occupied buildings, and they raised public attention through their claims to central urban spaces and resources. In their active responses to the depredations and indignities of detention and waiting, they became recognized as ‘political subjects with rights and voices rather than passive victims or stigmatized outsiders.’

In Chapter 28, in their work on the law and court system in the United Kingdom, Gill, Allsopp, Burridge, Griffiths, Paszkiewicz, and Rotter interrogate the absence rather than the presence of refugee voices and political subjectivities. Drawing on a number of refugee claims cases that went through the UK courts in recent years, they demonstrate how the law’s privileging of bodily presence worked to the detriment of numerous asylum
claimants, who were unable to advocate for themselves or even fully understand the situation they were in. Whether owing to fear, pain, lack of comprehension, or some combination of these factors, many refugees were effectively excluded from access to justice despite their physical presence at their asylum hearings. In this chapter, the authors review and expand on analytical approaches to concepts of absence and presence and offer a typology of how different forms of presence might be ‘translated into the legal context.’ Through this process they hope to both reveal and resist the many exclusions that arise from the legal system in UK-based refugee claim determinations.

Polly Pallister-Wilkins, in Chapter 29, approaches questions of migration and humanitarianism through looking at their intersection in border spaces. In recent years, as the world’s borders have become increasingly violent, there has been a corresponding rise of humanitarian actors in these liminal spaces. Pallister-Wilkins examines some of the intended and unintended consequences of this humanitarian presence, including the relationship between humanitarian practices and the political regimes responsible for these violent borders – and the increasingly risky strategies of mobility used by migrants to navigate them. Using the concept of triage she examines the way that the humanitarian care of bodies at the border becomes sorted and rationalized as a form of pre-emptive risk management – one that does not disturb or call attention to the larger forces that create such violent regimes of mobility in the first place (cf. Mitchell and MacFarlane, 2016). She argues for the importance of a deepened awareness and critical concern for the ways in which im/mobility interacts with humanitarian practices of this type.

In Chapter 30, Deirdre Conlon examines the asylum process in the United States through the lens of neoliberal governmentality. She examines multiple aspects of the application and adjudication of asylum claims to unpack how actors are positioned and governed within the asylum system. She finds that the process is complicated, messy, and often contradictory. While rational and effective practices and subjects may be desired and demanded, the asylum process itself is mired in bureaucracy and scarcity, thus creating the conditions in which inefficiencies and irrationalities multiply. At the same time, while neoliberal governmentality presupposes the constitution of calculating, entrepreneurial actors, the asylum process encourages and necessitates both enterprising behavior but also compliance and passivity on the part of asylum seekers. Conlon concludes by noting the importance of attending to the heterogeneous, unstable, and paradoxical spaces and processes of the asylum process to better understand the complexity of neoliberal forms of governance as they play out on the ground.

In Chapter 31, Tazzioli and Garelli scrutinize refugee governance and the policies and politics of asylum by taking up the question of mapping. In their analysis, they show how normative refugee mapping imposes a Westphalian imaginary that is both territorially fixed and static. They argue for a ‘counter-mapping’ approach with respect to the geographies of the asylum system. By this, they mean an approach that embraces a reflexive cartography, one in which the practice of mapping is constantly interrogated, thus helping to unsettle and unpack ‘the spatial assumptions upon which migration maps are crafted.’ Tazzioli and Garelli thus frame counter-mapping not merely in terms of resistance to a linear, territorial, and statist view from above, but more broadly as an epistemological move in which the cartographic visibility, representation, and mobility of migrants itself is constantly questioned and examined.

Katharyne Mitchell and Key MacFarlane take up the question of refugee protection by
faith-based actors in Chapter 32. Their study focuses on the transnational practices and relationships between European churches and allies that form what they call a sanctuary network. They are interested in the ways that the sanctuary network’s cross-border relationships and implicit assumptions about the necessity and value of alternative forms of justice have existed for centuries, and can be called on and reactivated by multiple actors at different historical junctures. Drawing on interviews as well as archival data, Mitchell and MacFarlane show how contemporary church-based sanctuary networks are now operating in Europe, how they are linked to previous transnational sanctuary movements, and how they are both similar to and different from other types of transnational social movements. They contend that the sanctuary network demonstrates a bundle of spatially embedded solidarities across both space and time that is important to consider in the history of refugee justice movements and transnational social movements more generally.

REFERENCES


16 Handbook on critical geographies of migration


