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# 1. Borders and bodies: siting critical geographies of migration

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## INTRODUCTION

The place of migration in the discipline of Geography is changing. Once clearly located within population geography, and studied in terms of its role in population change, migration studies has spilled out beyond these sub-disciplinary confines. What Ehrkamp calls the “geographies of migration” now takes in much more than the role of migration in population change (Ehrkamp 2017). Geographers studying migration now draw on a much wider range of influences, which include the cultural turn, the mobilities turn and transnational approaches (King 2012), as well as geopolitics (Ehrkamp 2017), legal geographies (Strauss 2017) and labour geographies (Buckley et al. 2017). Smith has described this as “the ascendancy of migration studies” (Smith 2018, p. 297).

The opening up of migration studies in geography has led to a proliferation of research on the topic, using a wide diversity of theoretical and empirical approaches. Despite this, there are two clear areas of focus. The first considers the causes of migration. This is a concern that stretches all the way back to Ravenstein’s formulation of laws of migration in the 1880s (Ravenstein 1885, 1889). However, the emphasis now is increasingly on the broader issues of the migration-development relationship and the role of migration policy (see, e.g., Czaika and De Haas 2013; De Haas 2010; Skeldon 2008). The second considers the effects of migration and, increasingly, migrant experiences. Geographers have traditionally paid considerable attention to effects of migration on place, for example, through mapping residential segregation (see, e.g., Ellis et al. 2004). However, the growing emphasis on embodiment has led to a broader conceptualization of migrant experiences (see, e.g., Gorman-Murray 2009; Pratt 2012).

In this chapter, our focus is specifically on what we call critical geographies of migration. We define critical geographies of migration as spatially informed theories and practice explicitly directed towards understanding and challenging migration as a site of exploitation. Critical geographies of migration are certainly concerned with the causes of migration though, in many instances, they focus on efforts to restrict people’s movements across national borders, whether legally or physically. However, the more significant emphasis is on the effects of migration, particularly through a focus on the experiences of migrants who are vulnerable, marginalized or exploited. These experiences are intersectional, and critical geographies of migration are increasingly addressing the relationship between migrant status, race and sexuality, adding to a longer-standing interest in migration and gender. In considering the causes and effects of migration, critical geographers are informed by two broad theoretical approaches – geopolitics and biopolitics – with an increasing emphasis on biopolitical approaches in recent years.

We begin the chapter by locating the critical geographies of migration. We identify and interrogate two key sites that are studied: the border and the body. We then reflect on the theoretical and scalar shifts that have occurred within critical approaches to migration in geography. We conclude with our brief reflections on the future for critical geographies of migration.

## LOCATING CRITICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF MIGRATION

Critical geographies of migration are concerned with identifying and challenging the processes that serve to marginalize and oppress migrants. From our perspective, we are concerned with how these processes are spatialized and spatially grounded. Given this, we consider that there are two key sites where critical geographers interested in the issue of migration have directed their attention: the border and the body. Each of these sites is complex and multifaceted and, consequently, provides important insights into how critical geographies of migration are imagined and operationalized. We first discuss borders, paying attention to significant borders and the practices of bordering in relation to migrants, including the increasing reliance on detention as a bordering practice. We then discuss the body. First, we show how migrant bodies are hierarchized with particular reference to status, and how these hierarchies shape the engagement of critical geographers. Through a focus on work, specifically precarity and care work, we then discuss embodied geographies in more detail.

### **The Border**

Specific borders, namely, the European Union's external border and the border between the USA and Mexico, have received considerable attention. Van Houtum and Pijpers (2007) described the European Union (EU) as a gated community and its border and immigration regime as two-faced, highlighting the stratification of people into different immigrant statuses based on their perceived desirability. The effects of this regime were clearly shown by Collyer (2007), who charted the difficult, fragmented journeys of trans-Saharan migrants as they tried to get to the EU, and described the common experiences of "isolation, uncertainty and hardship" (Collyer 2007, p. 685), which on occasion resulted in death (Van Houtum and Pijpers 2007, pp. 298–9). These "deaths at the border" of the EU, an ongoing and persistent issue, have come under more sustained scrutiny in recent years with the advent of the so-called migrant or refugee crisis (Kynsilehto 2017). This particular crisis is defined in terms of a rapid increase in the numbers of people seeking to enter Europe, often along hazardous routes. Stories of Mediterranean shipwrecks and drownings, treacherous land journeys across Balkan countries, and violent border enforcement inside the Schengen border regime provide one means of framing this "crisis" of human mobility. Yet, as De Genova points out, the crisis is also framed as "a crisis of control over the ostensible borders of Europe" (De Genova 2016, p. 37), and their perceived porosity in relation to undesirable migrants and, increasingly, terrorism. This, too, has been a focus of the work of critical geographers, who have drawn attention to the ways in which the EU has been attempting to securitize its borders by externalizing migration management. The EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) is a key policy framework

for border externalization. GAMM began in 2005.<sup>1</sup> It provides the framework for how the EU engages with countries outside the EU in relation to migration and asylum, primarily in order to prevent irregular migration to Europe (Hampshire 2016). Casas-Cortes et al. (2015) show both the spatial ambition and reach of GAMM, and the difficulties in its implementation, not least because of the actions of migrants who resist being contained by official migrant routes.

Critical research on the EU border emphasizes the importance of naming and understanding borders as practice. As De Genova writes, “the agonistic coherence and ostensible fixity of borders – their thing-like qualities – only emerge as the *effect* of active processes by which borders must be made to appear *thing-like*” (De Genova 2016, p. 47, emphases in the original). This focus on borders as practice has also marked work on the USA-Mexico border. Nevins describes some of the ways in which the “thing-like” border was delineated and enforced, beginning in the 1980s. This included installing high-intensity floodlights, erecting steel walls, and increasing the number of Border Patrol agents in order to deter migration from Mexico to the USA (Nevins 2002, p. 65). The physical border between the USA and Mexico was, of course, central to the presidential campaign of Donald Trump. The specifications for the expanded USA-Mexico wall announced in March 2017 included that it be “physically imposing in height” and able to deter “for a minimum of 1 hour . . . a physical breach of the wall” by tools that include a sledgehammer, car jack or battery operated cutting tools (quoted in Jusionyte 2017, p. 16).

The discussion of borders has moved way beyond physical boundaries. While the EU border has been externalized, the USA-Mexico border has been internalized. Coleman describes the process as “the growth of interior immigration policing practices” (Coleman 2007, p. 55), which includes the devolution of federal immigrant powers to non-federal officers such as local police. In this sense, the USA-Mexico border is now policed all across the USA (Coleman and Kocher 2011), with a consequential rise in the numbers of forced removals, or deportations, from the country. There were 4.3 million forced removals between 2000 and 2013, over 93 per cent of which were to Latin America. The majority related to immigration rather than criminal offences, and often included people from non-border states who had been living in the USA for at least three years (Price and Breese 2016, pp. 367–9). The effects of the interiorization of USA border enforcement are evident in the lives of migrant workers. Research with migrant dairy workers in Wisconsin highlighted “a pervasive sense of surveillance and fear of apprehension” (Harrison and Lloyd 2012, p. 376). People they interviewed told stories about workplace raids, apprehension and detention, leading to what Harrison and Lloyd identified as their “deportability” (Harrison and Lloyd 2012, p. 366). At the same time, critical geographers have highlighted the contrast with the treatment of the other significant US land border, that with Canada (Sparke 2006).

In addition to work on the shifting forms of the EU and US borders, critical geographers have also investigated other sites that are central to practices of migration control. Mountz describes these sites as an “enforcement archipelago” (Mountz 2011a), implicated in processes of migrant detention (Mountz et al. 2013). Mountz focuses on islands, and lists the wide range of sites – from Guam in the USA to Lampedusa in Italy to

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<sup>1</sup> When first introduced, it was known as GAM (Global Approach to Migration). The name changed in 2011.

Nauru – where asylum seekers are detained and, in some instances, prevented from applying for asylum (Mountz 2011a, p. 121). But islands are just one example of the range of sites of detention, many of which operate as extrajudicial for migrants who are detained. Other examples include camps, prisons and specifically designated immigration detention centres (Davies and Isakjee 2015; Moran et al. 2013; Mountz et al. 2013). For Mountz et al., the proliferation of spaces of migrant detention “elucidates a conceptual and material crossroads between the domestic and foreign, the intimate and geopolitical, the detention centre and the prison” (Mountz et al. 2013, p. 536). In their account of the Calais refugee camp and its inhabitants, Davies and Isakjee (2015) illustrate this crossroads, and its contradictions, in a vivid and powerful way.

Practices of migrant detention have shifted the location of the border for migrants, as has technology. Amoore (2006) drew attention to this when she introduced the concept of the biometric border. Her specific focus was the War on Terror, and how electronic personal data was increasingly being used to “classify and govern the movement of people across borders” (Amoore 2006, p. 341). As a consequence, then, borders have become mobile. As Amoore writes, the body “becomes the carrier of the border as it is inscribed with multiple encoded boundaries of access” (Amoore 2006, pp. 347–8). The implications of the biometric border for migrants were clear for Amoore, who described how the category “immigrant” was becoming a signifier of illegitimate mobility. This was further developed in later studies of biometric border control regimes, such as the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project in Canada (Pero and Smith 2014). Coleman and Stuesse characterize this as a shifting emphasis on policing immigrant bodies rather than just borders (2014), though they, with others, also acknowledge the increasing levels of state border militarization around the world. This includes more border walls and fences; border guards and uniformed troops, both privatized and public; and surveillance hardware such as drones, helicopters and armoured vehicles (Jones and Johnson 2016). These militarization efforts often target particular migrants, as is the case for the EU and the USA-Mexico border. In the process, borders are increasingly inscribed on the bodies of migrants. We turn to the body in the next subsection.

## **The Body**

Our second site of interest is the body. We argue that the body has been put to use by critical geographers of migration in two key ways. The first is by highlighting the ways in which migrant bodies are categorized and hierarchized, and the effects of these processes. The second involves highlighting the embodied experiences of migrants. In this chapter, we show the broader critical potential of this focus on embodied experience by highlighting just one of the many areas of investigation, namely, migrant experiences of/at work.

Critical geographers have paid particular attention to the categorization of migrant bodies. There has been a sustained focus on migrant status, and on particular groups of migrants defined in terms of status. Such groups include forced migrants (a term inclusive of asylum seekers and refugees) and undocumented migrants, many of whom are understood as vulnerable to exploitation. Much of this work is ethnographic in scope, and is highly aware of the ethics of research with vulnerable migrants (Griffiths 2018; Korjonen-Kuusipuro et al. 2018; Kynsilehto 2016). Collyer interviewed over 130 undocumented migrants in Morocco – 85 per cent male – about the dangers they faced

on their “fragmented journeys”. These dangers included natural obstacles, the actions of traffickers and smugglers, and state violence. For those undocumented migrants who were stranded in Morocco, unable to reach Europe, their situation was often quite desperate. A 29-year-old from Cameroon, who had been sleeping rough in Morocco for five years, said, “I no longer have the courage to fight any more” (Collyer 2010, p.283). This focus on forced and undocumented migrants draws particular attention to their experiences of hardships and exploitation.

The impact of enforced waiting has been discussed in detail by feminist geographers as well. Mountz, for example, described the poignancy of “life in limbo, efforts to seek asylum elsewhere and frustration with the length of their wait” for Afghan asylum seekers detained on the island of Lombok in Indonesia (Mountz 2011b; see also Hyndman and Giles 2017). Within this category, there has also been attention to the specific experiences of children and young people, most often those in the asylum regimes of European countries. Crawley worked with separated minors in the UK to chart their experiences of the asylum interview, which is carried out with an asylum seeker by the UK Border Agency, and then given a prominent place when the application for asylum is being determined. She points out the ways in which children were listened to but not heard, and argues for the need to recognize both the principle of child agency and children’s voices in the asylum process (Crawley 2010).

The significant increase in research on forced migration and, by association, forced migrants has led to suggestions that the topic may now be over-researched, particularly in the Middle East and North African regions (Pascucci 2017). When it comes to research with other (non-forced) types of undocumented migrants, however, the approach taken by critical geographers differs slightly. This is particularly the case in the USA, where the category of “undocumented migration” receives more attention than “forced migration”. In the USA, there is a stronger concern with the consequences of lack of status, such as deportability (Harrison and Lloyd 2012). In contrast, ethnographic research in the USA often includes undocumented migrants without necessarily prioritizing this aspect of their identity. Winders provides a clear example of this approach in her detailed study of the lives of Latino immigrants in Nashville, Tennessee – a new immigrant destination. While she acknowledges that most of the immigrants who participated in her research were undocumented, Winders’s focus is on their everyday lives and on their encounters with long-term residents, rather than on their vulnerabilities (Winders 2013). The politics of understatement employed here, which focuses less on status and more on everyday experiences, serves as a useful contrast to the politics of hyper-visibility in research on forced migrants. Yet, the politics of understatement creates its own difficulties, given the size of the population of undocumented migrants in the USA – estimated at 11.4 million in 2012 (Baker and Rytina 2013). The interest in and emphasis on migrants whose status makes them vulnerable to exploitation is understandable for critical geographers. However, the contrast in treatment raises broader concerns about how status and space influence these critical approaches. Ehrkamp insists that critical geographers should “carefully examine the terms and categories we use to describe people who move across spaces because these categories have the potential to inflict epistemological violence” (Ehrkamp 2017, p.814). The terms and categories that are used – for example, forced and undocumented migrants – are defined and shaped by states, and serve to create hierarchies of migrants. When this translates into contrasting methodologies, such as defining some groups in

terms of vulnerabilities and hardships only, critical geographers have to be aware of how their practices may, in turn, serve to further reinforce the hierarchies created by states. The example of unaccompanied refugee minors illustrates this point. Researchers who focus on the protection and institutional care of unaccompanied refugee minors minimize the reality that, as minors, they do not have family reunification rights (see Kuusisto-Arponen and Gilmartin, Chapter 6 in this volume; also Herz and Lalander 2017).

While critical geographic research on forced and undocumented migrants certainly engages with embodied experiences, we want to discuss the issue of embodiment in more detail through a focus on work. Migration research in general is characterized by a preoccupation with work, which stems from the common sense belief that most migration is for the purposes of economic gain through work. As a consequence, the experiences of migrants at work are subject to intense investigation. Among these broad areas of focus are experiences of exploitation and discrimination and sectoral concentration (e.g., Martin and Prokkola 2017; Vaittinen 2014). We first explore exploitation and discrimination as it is framed by recent critical geographies of precarity. We then highlight care work as a feminized sectoral concentration for migrants. The intersections between precarity and care provide important insights into the embodied experiences of migrants that, while concentrated on work, have broader critical implications.

Waite uses the example of migrant labourers to argue for the analytical significance of precarity, which she defines as “life worlds that are inflected with uncertainty and instability” (Waite 2009, p. 416). She makes the case that migrant labourers in the UK “may experience insecure contracts, poor conditions at work, eroded rights at work and generalised exploitation” (Waite 2009, p. 423), yet also points to the problems with labelling groups or categories and homogenizing their experiences. As a result, she suggests that a more useful approach is to consider the spatiotemporal moments when migrant labourers might work as a precariat, if only temporarily. More recent research suggests, however, that those spatiotemporal moments are becoming more common. As Lewis et al. insist, certain migrants are now a crucial part of the low-wage economies of wealthier countries: without their presence and their exploitation, those low-wage economies could not continue to function (Lewis et al. 2015; see also Scott 2013). However, they argue that precarity is now a function of many working experiences regardless of migration status, and so the term is insufficient to capture the realities for many migrants. As a result, they introduce the term *hyper-precariety* in order to show the additional vulnerabilities that result from the insecurities of immigration regimes. *Hyper-precariety* is “produced by the nexus of employment and immigration precarity”, and it is experienced through deportability, risk of injury without access to adequate healthcare, and a reliance on overtly transactional relationships (Lewis et al. 2015, pp. 593–4). Experiences of precarity and *hyper-precariety* are grounded in a range of case studies that explore what Lorey elsewhere calls *precarization* – a form of governance that destabilizes both employment and the conduct of life (Lorey 2015, p. 13). The interplay between immigration status and work is highlighted in research on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in Canada, which shows how a “continuum of exploitation” is created (Strauss and McGrath 2017). Similarly, Axelsson et al. show that while Swedish migration policies create the conditions for the exploitation of migrant workers who are required to be *hyper-flexible*, those workers in turn accept precarious conditions in a trade-off for the promise of permanent residency (Axelsson et al. 2017). In their study of migrant workers in three different sectors in Finland, Martin

and Prokkola (2017) argue that context-specific forms of precarity are a result of the strategic territorialization of borders by the state and by employers. This precarization affects both skilled and unskilled workers (Martin and Prokkola 2017).

Issues of vulnerability and precarity are clearly evident in the experiences of migrants employed in care work, which includes domestic work, child and elder care, as well as more formalized forms of care work through medical centres such as hospitals. The work itself is intimate, often dealing with vulnerable bodies: it is usefully characterized as “body work” that, by nature of its feminization, is also devalued (Kofman 2013; Walton-Roberts 2012). The spatial concentration of care work in domestic homes creates exposure to exploitation for many migrant care workers, and critical geographers – particularly feminists – have been at the forefront in documenting and analysing these experiences. For example, Geraldine Pratt’s long and sustained engagement with Filipino domestic workers in Vancouver, recruited as part of the Live-In Caregiver Program in Canada, has highlighted their difficult experiences as workers as well as the toll of long-term separation from their families (Pratt 2012). The abuse of migrant domestic workers is addressed more directly by Huang and Yeoh, who use court and press reports to document the deeply troubling experiences of some “foreign maids” in Singapore. The reports document the physical, sexual and psychological abuse endured by women from a range of Asian countries, including Indonesia, the Philippines and India, for misdemeanours that included poor laundry, ironing and kitchen skills (Huang and Yeoh 2007).

Critical geographers have also paid attention to other forms of migrant care workers, such as nurses and doctors (see, e.g., Dyer et al. 2008; Walton-Roberts 2012). Importantly, though, this research insists on the importance of an understanding of migrant experiences that extends beyond work. As Kofman suggests, leaving the circuits of family and work disconnected results in “hanging onto traditional gendered knowledge in terms of categories of migration” (Kofman 2012, p. 145). For Kofman and Raghuram (2015), this means a focus on the broader question of social reproduction. In migration research, social reproduction is sometimes conceptualized as “migrant trajectories”, which have transformative power through “the capacity of the migrant body to tie together different networks of relatedness, when navigating through global space” (Vaittinen 2014, p. 197). Thus, the embodied presence and movement of migrants simultaneously reproduces and challenges the “perceived” order of global economic space, bordering practices and multiscalar migration governance. We argue, with Vaittinen, that labour migration articulates both global political and power structures and also multiple embodiments of human and institutional settings, which are part of the wider processes of social reproduction.

## CONNECTING GEOPOLITICS AND BIOPOLITICS

Our discussion of the critical geographies of migration has focused on two key sites, the border and the body. This emphasis reflects two broad theoretical approaches: geopolitics and biopolitics. Elsewhere, we argued that geopolitical and biopolitical theory underpin much research on migration within political geography which, in turn, shapes the study of migration within the discipline of geography as a whole (Kuusisto-Arponen and Gilmartin 2015). However, this is not sufficient to capture the diversity of ways in which critical geographers have approached the study of migration. In this section, we develop

our understanding of the relationship between geopolitics and biopolitics, and highlight how this understanding is enhanced by a focus on how migrant bodies and mobilities actively work against bordering practices.

As Coleman and Stuesse point out, there is a general impasse in the social sciences and humanities “which insists on biopolitics and geopolitics as opposed models of power” (Coleman and Stuesse 2014, p. 37). Their particular concern is border studies, and they argue that geopolitics and biopolitics or, in their formulation, topography and topology, are interlinked rather than separate when it comes to the policing of migrants and migration. Our wider discussion of the border and the body show these interconnections clearly. The border, we argue, is more than the physical barrier that separates one nation-state from another, but is also a practice that is increasingly inscribed on the bodies of migrants. Similarly, the migrant body is the object of geopolitical and geoeconomic processes, whether through state-defined migrant statuses or the increasing precarity of work. These processes intersect in the embodied experiences of migrants.

The interconnections of geopolitical and biopolitical approaches to critical geographies of migration are clear through processes of hierarchization. States create and reinforce migrant status hierarchies, deciding who has permission to enter and live in a country and under what conditions. However, hierarchies are also created and reinforced through everyday practices, such as through the figure of the “good migrant”. Findlay et al. (2013) provide a fascinating insight into how the good migrant is understood and reproduced in their account of research with recruitment agents and employers in the UK and Latvia. They chart the physical and behavioural characteristics that are favoured: young and healthy, flexible, compliant and self-regulated. In doing so, they insist that the production of the idealized migrant worker is a dual process “in which migrants self-regulate themselves as well as being directly regulated by recruiters” (Findlay et al. 2013, p. 163).

The nod to migrant agency in this discussion of the “good worker” is important, because it highlights another, important way in which geopolitics and biopolitics intersect. This is through a focus on the geopolitical practices of migrants, whether local, national or transnational. For Casas-Cortes et al., this is apparent in the mobility practices of migrants which act as a “collective force re-making space”, thus departing from approaches that construct migrants as victims (2015, pp. 898–9). Other critical geographers emphasize acts of solidarity. No More Deaths/No Más Muertes, a volunteer organization working in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands, places water, food and other crucial supplies along busy desert routes for migrants. In his participatory research with the organization, Johnson shows how the border site itself is important for organizing and sustaining social movement activity. This is because the everyday lives of volunteers “are surrounded by material evidence of migration enforcement and filled with narratives and anecdotes about encounters with migrants or Border Patrol” (Johnson 2015, p. 1255).

Johnson focuses on camps in the desert, in contrast to most work on solidarity which emphasizes urban settings because of their potential for alliances between disadvantaged groups (Bauder 2016, p. 258). One such focus is on Sanctuary cities, which have policies that aim to provide services to residents regardless of migration status (Ridgley 2013). Others focus on the emergent politics of migration in cities, where the tensions between governmental attempts to control migrants and migrants’ desire to control their own lives and mobilities play out in a striking way (Collins 2016; Darling 2017). More recently, research on gay, lesbian and queer migration has highlighted the draw of urban areas

for coming-out and for work, while recognizing that cities, particularly for ethnic and racial minorities, are often spaces of exclusion (Lewis 2012; Lewis and Mills 2016). It is also important to emphasize the ways in which many critical geographers actively work in collaboration with migrants to actively challenge their exploitation and marginalization. Geraldine Pratt's long collaboration with the Philippine Women Centre of BC (Vancouver, British Columbia) provides an excellent example of critical and engaged research that is both locally and translocally situated and is directed towards meaningful social and political change (Pratt 2012). While processes of hierarchization differentiate migrants on the basis of legal status, creating insecurity and vulnerability, migrant lives are more complex than status alone. Critical geographic work that emphasizes networks, connections, and acts of political protest and solidarity offers an important corrective to research and broader discourses that posit migrants as either helpless or dangerous but, in either case, not fully belonging to the places where they live.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In the field of critical geographies of migration, there is an increasing focus on the intersection of geopolitical and biopolitical theory, with particular attention to how borders and hierarchies are created and enforced. This work is nuanced and politically engaged yet, at times, insufficiently reflexive on its own omissions and contradictions. In this regard, Pascucci's identification of over-research is particularly important. Her particular concern is based on her experiences of fieldwork in Egypt, which she saw as enabled and shaped by a broader humanitarian infrastructure that, in turn, led to certain places and groups of people being over-studied (Pascucci 2017). Though grounded in a particular place and time, we believe that Pascucci raises issues of broader relevance for critical geographers of migration. Specifically, to what extent does our research reinforce rather than challenge hierarchies, and what does this mean for the future of migration research?

In our discussion of the body, we highlighted the classification of migrant bodies, and how this has led to a concentration on particular types of migrant bodies, defined in terms of status. Critical geographers have paid most attention to forced and undocumented migrants, and to migrants in precarious employment, in part because their experiences illuminate the effects of status hierarchies for those with the least power. However, paying critical attention to other migration streams – for example, those defined as highly skilled – would also provide important insights into the pernicious effects of hierarchization, particularly as it pits migrants against each other (Mitchell 1998; see also Martin and Prokkola 2017). Given this, broader attention to questions of intersectionality is also required, since migrants enter and live in places that are marked by other forms of social differentiation. Racial and ethnic hierarchies are of particular relevance here, since their spatial articulation may place migrants in different, and perhaps challenging, positions (Pulido 2018). The emphasis on precarity as experienced by many workers, and not just migrant workers, provides one example of how other aspects of identity might be reconsidered.

Our discussion of the border highlights research that operates within a border ontology. By this, we mean that it takes the existence of borders for granted, even when assessing their form and meaning from a critical perspective (Gilmartin 2018). Given this, it seems

crucial for critical geographers of migration to provide an expanded account of how borders work. We outlined work on the spatial and technological siting of borders, which brings together geopolitics and biopolitics. It is clear, though, that work from a critical legal geography perspective is also required, given the significance of law in defining and enforcing borders. Courtroom battles in the USA over President Trump's travel ban, first introduced in 2017, provide a timely example of the pressing need to bring critical legal perspectives to bear on the border.

Critical geographers of migration already provide crucial insights into how migrants experience injustice. Those insights are spatially grounded in studies of borders and bodies. Expanding the conceptualizations of both, and considering their connections with broader socio-spatial formations, will enhance our ability to understand migration not as exceptional, but as central to and illuminating of the contemporary human condition.

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