

FINDING WAYS THROUGH EUROSPACE: WEST AFRICAN MOVERS RE-VIEWING EUROPE FROM THE INSIDE

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Geographer and ethnographer, Joris Schapendonk offers an insight into the anthropologies of migration, mobility, borders, globalisation, and the West African diaspora in Europe, through his ethnographic exploration of the lifeworlds of African movers in Europe. Schapendonk describes his methodology as ‘trajectory ethnography’; working with a core group of informants and others introduced through that core group over an extended period. He travels to meet them in their disparate locations as opposed to focusing on one single physical field site, an approach that captures ‘im/mobility as it unfolds’ across shifting destinations, aspirations, breakthroughs and setbacks over time (p. 8).

The book presents a ‘de-migrantized’ perspective on African mobility in Europe. Schapendonk presents two interrelated arguments supporting his call to move away from the language of migration. Firstly, the terminology is tied up with the ‘normative logics of the nation state’ (p. 2) logics his research participants – movers, as he calls them – operate outwith. They have become experts at transcending and overcoming the expectations of the nation state, refusing to ‘reground in a national space’ after they arrive in Europe, in favour of operating in, indeed producing and enacting, a ‘post-national Europe’ free of the limitations of national belonging (p. 2). Schapendonk highlights the cruel irony that while the EU has had limited success creating a post-national, integrated Europe through programmes like Erasmus, the African movers who come closest to actually producing this post-national landscape find their movements strictly and harshly controlled by the same authorities.

Schapendonk’s second argument against migration terminology is that it limits us to a ‘reductionist and sedentarist understanding’ of the mobility of so-called migrants (p. 3). Migration language encourages us to think of migration as an in-between phase between place of origin and destination, with any further movements classified as onward migration. This fails to capture the complexity of West African movers’ mobility, which frequently involves moves both between and within Europe and Africa, often living trans-local lives between disparate locations. Schapendonk also notes that the idea of the ‘migrant’ is a political artefact, produced and reproduced through discourses and political practices which control and restrict movement.

While some movers do have unrealistic expectations of the economic rewards Europe has to offer, and political persecution and oppression do play a role, Schapendonk refuses to explain West Africans' desire to reach Europe in this simplistic, push/pull idiom. Instead, he grounds the desire to reach Europe in the notion of 'worlding' – the urban sensibility that the real action, the real purpose of urban life, is always taking place somewhere else (p. 18-9), and pre-existing West African cultures of mobility. These cultures of mobility encourage diverse and innovative practices of mobility.

Movers adopt a wide array of 'hustling' practices in their efforts to reach Europe, including earning money to fund visa applications (perceived as a 'lottery') or pay for their travel by the 'backway' through Libya and other hubs of irregular mobility. They also nurture direct connections with Europeans either online or physically through the West African tourist industry. Schapendonk argues that would-be movers 'invert the logics of an oppressive political economy... to create space to manoeuvre within a setting of precarity and uncertainty' (p. 27). This is to say that they turn their precarious, subaltern positions to their advantage, using them to create new possibilities for mobility to Europe.

Once they reach Europe, movers rarely settle in one place permanently, instead exploring new destinations and returning to old ones in a cycle of multiple mobilities. Seemingly paradoxically, receiving citizenship or papers to remain in country X does not trigger permanent settlement; instead it more often opens doors for further mobility. This is exemplified by several informants who worked towards the goal of attaining a Dutch passport to improve their chances of relocating to the UK.

Successful mobility relies on the strength of the movers' 'affective circuits', the broad and ever-changing network of personal connections we all maintain. Movers have to navigate these affective circuits much as they have to navigate the physical landscapes of Europe and Africa, to arrange everything from work and accommodation in Europe to payment of Libyan smugglers. Schapendonk uses the term 'affective circuits' (p. 57) in an attempt to move away from the language of social networks and 'strong and weak ties' preferred within migration studies. He argues it allows a more nuanced understanding of social connection and social capital, as it accounts for the fact connections need to be maintained, the possibility that connections can fail to produce material gains, and the reality that they impose responsibility as much as opportunity.

Schapendonk's call for a 'de-migranticized' view of West African mobility is compelling. Adopting this perspective clearly offers the anthropologist a greater, more nuanced understanding of migration and mobility from Global South to Global North which will only remain at the forefront of European policymaking

in years to come. Eurospace is readable and reasonably accessible, with the 'trajectory ethnography' methodology allowing for powerful, emotionally resonant experiences of individual informants to be captured and communicated.

While it does include some female informants, Eurospace acknowledges it primarily focuses on young men. Other work could and should be done by researchers to explore the distinctively female West African experience of mobility in Europe. *Finding Ways Through Eurospace* is nonetheless a valuable, important work which should be read by scholars working in the fields of migration/mobility, European integration or African diasporas. It will also be of interest to scholars interested in biopower and governmentality, given the level of control exercised by the state on movers across their lives.

PACING MOBILITIES: TIMING, INTENSITY, TEMPO AND DURATION OF HUMAN MOVEMENTS

VERED AMIT AND NOEL SALAZAR (EDS.)

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Vered Amit's and Noel Salazar's edited volume, *Pacing Mobilities: Timing, Intensity, Tempo and Duration of Human Movements* was released in June 2020, and is the 8th volume in the series 'Worlds in Motion' by Berghahn Books. The book was released during a period when notions of 'mobility' are being challenged, and what used to be taken for granted or infused with a sense of privilege –at least for those described in the volume as of 'middling, Euro-American profile'- is longed for. This context makes the volume's insights into diverse aspects of experiencing mobilities, as defined by the complex settings within which humans move, even more interesting as they highlight the contested character of 'moving.' Reviewing a book on the 'pace of mobilities' after a year of the ongoing pandemic and lockdowns that have unquestionably perplexed humans' mobilities, and at the imminent materialization of the promise for easing restrictions and resuming mobilities, can be pretty interesting on its own.

As Amit and Salazar argue in the Introduction, so far, emphasis has been placed on spatial dimensions of mobility, rather than temporal ones, although movement occurs within time. While 'pace' has always underpinned mobility, it has not been extensively employed as a tool to explore and understand it. However, it is the very notion of 'pace' that is key in understanding the complexities that (im)mobility entail, as this book highlights. As Amit and Salazar eloquently argue, 'pace is a concept that helps us understand the dynamic relationships between people, space and time' (p. 2). In other words, pace allows us to situate the embodied experience at the intersections of spatiality and temporality. Consequently, focusing on 'pace' can help reorient our view of (im)mobilities to look beyond geographic and/ or social movement (see Reed-Danahay 2020 for a recent take on Bourdieu's notion of 'social space'). 'Pace' enables us to understand mobility within the conditions that define it, as well as view mobility itself as a condition defining and a practice shaping everyday life.

In terms of identifying the purpose of mobility, the chapters are distinguished into three parts, focusing respectively on recreational mobilities (Salazar, chapter 1; Dyck and Hognestad, chapter 2; Kaaristo, chapter 3), the wish to 'escape' from a given 'pace of life' and search for a more suitable one (Forget, chapter 4;

Korpela, chapter 5), and mobility undertaken for employment and/or educational purposes (Suter chapter 6; Reed-Danahay, chapter 7; Amit, chapter 8). Each chapter shows individuals' endeavours to move efficiently, their narratives of experienced mobilities, and the constraints they had to consider and navigate. Such approaches reorient the reader into critically assessing stereotypical understandings of mobility as 'positive' or 'negative.' They suggest that we reflect on who and under which circumstances is someone eligible for a particular type of mobility, and eventually what it takes 'to move.' What emerges palpably throughout the chapters comprising this volume is that mobilities and their respective distinct pace, occur at the intersections of overlapping or conflicting spheres of life, such as balancing work and family needs with the desire to accompany athletes on road trips (Dyck and Hognestad); balancing the inner body rhythm with external factors urging for movement at a specific pace, so as to retain the leisure character of an activity (Kaaristo); navigating migration bureaucracy and meeting the needs of family members at different stages in their lives while pursuing an alternative to the Western lifestyle (Korpela).

Moreover, mobilities actualize within pre-existing sociocultural contexts that urge particular types of mobilities to occur in the first place. Sociocultural contexts may comprise the structures that enable or hinder mobilities for professional or educational purposes illustrating the dependency of the people who undertake these mobilities and their limited control over the conditions of their movement (see Suter; Amit). Sociocultural contexts also shape the imaginaries and emotions that lead to the individual choice to move, either for well-being reasons (Salazar), to enhance their social position (Reed-Danahay), or to live in a way that resonates with culturally embedded notions of 'freedom' (Forget).

Focusing on the notion of 'pace' enables the reader to understand mobility in both its spatial and temporal dimensions. Under this scope, the reader can grasp the interactions of competitive factors, namely the wider, sociocultural contexts that suggest specific mobility trajectories, and the individual's efforts to control and/or negotiate them. The idea that pertains to this volume is that mobility is actualized not only across space, but rather, also across time. What really affects the overall experience is the timeframe within which spatial movement occurs, and the factors that determine it.

Undoubtedly the volume focuses on a wide range of mobilities, though this is undertaken by a very specific group of people. As the editors themselves clarify, the prime focus is on types of mobilities that are undertaken by people of a 'middling Euro-American profile.' More specifically, the focus is on people whose sociocultural references are located in Europe and (North) America and come from a 'middle' economic background. The latter, means that while they may have access to resources that facilitate their mobility, at the same time they need to carefully consider how to manage these resources, which are subject to the

terms and conditions of the respective providers (e.g. funding scheme, firm's policies etc.). Moreover, their capacity to move is further impacted by the broad range of infrastructures (e.g. transport policies, governmental regulations etc.) that facilitate and/or constrain mobilities.

This volume is the fruit of a call for papers on pacing mobilities hosted among the 2018 meetings of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA). The comprehensive discussion developed in each chapter benefits from rich ethnographic accounts and diverse theoretical frameworks. Thus, it provides insights into mobilities that exceed the particular scope of the volume. This volume could benefit anybody interested in studying and understanding mobilities more broadly. It draws relations between the sociocultural context within which mobility occurs, the desires and struggles of those who undertake it, and how the overall spatio-temporal mobility experience may affect those who undertake it.

Reference

Reed-Danahay. 2020. *Bourdieu and Social Space: Mobilities, Trajectories, Emplacements*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books