

“communication is limited” and they lack “long, in-depth conversations” (p. 205). On the contrary, the many wonderful *Star Trek* podcasts, YouTube blogs, sub-reddits, the remarkable “Confessions of an Aca-fan” blog, many other blogs, and probably all social media, do contain astoundingly long and in-depth conversations about *Star Trek*, held among many fans, over time, and often over great distances. For those seeking insight into the social movement and collective consumer identities within the interaction of digital technology and *Star Trek* fandom—a huge domain of fan interaction and experience encompassing not only fan forums, social media groups, and vlogs, but also virtual conventions and virtual worlds like *Star Trek Online*—this book unfortunately does not offer much.

I hesitate to recommend this book for any but the most focused and succinct classroom usage. The book often rockets back and forth in time without much rhyme or reason, the narrative linked mainly by the author’s fandom and the assumption that readers are interested in it. Much of the book’s research is descriptive rather than explanatory. Other verbatim from other fans (most gathered through personal email, it would seem) are presented without interpretation. For *Star Trek* fans, especially those who love the original series, this book should be a joy and a lot of fun to read. It should also be a good way to learn a bit about sociology and social psychology theory, along with stories about the TV shows and fan conventions.

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*Migration and Mortality: Social Death, Dispossession, and Survival in the Americas*, edited by **Jamie Longazel** and **Miranda Cady Hallett**. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2021. 288 pp. \$104.50 cloth. ISBN: 9781439919774.

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In the summer of 2004, the Pima County Medical Examiner’s Office had to lease a refrigerated truck because the morgue’s 120-body capacity could not keep up with

all the human remains that the U.S. Border Patrol was recovering from Arizona’s Sonoran Desert. By the year’s end, the medical examiner had processed the remains of nearly 200 migrants, of which most had perished from dehydration and prolonged exposure to the elements. Since then, the process of managing these deaths has become routine and institutionalized: Year in and year out, the U.S. Border Patrol has trucked in migrants’ bodies from the desert, while the medical examiner’s office has expanded its capacity to accommodate the growing workload. The county has contracted funeral companies to bury unidentified migrant remains in the local cemetery. Meanwhile, the Mexican consulate has dedicated staff to help notify the families of the dead.<sup>1</sup> In effect, a veritable cottage industry of actors has emerged to efficiently process these fatalities—as if these deaths were unavoidable, much like inclement weather. This routinized administration of mortality is no doubt also unfolding in other places along the “global color line” (p. 86), where migrants are perishing in catastrophic numbers.

Jamie Longazel and Miranda Cady Hallett’s edited *Migration and Mortality: Social Death, Dispossession, and Survival in the Americas* denaturalizes these circumstances by demonstrating the centrality of death and suffering to contemporary migration. This collection of essays illuminates the regulatory regimes that systematically produce anti-migrant violence. It does so, however, without succumbing to the mistaken belief that this lethality is an unintended consequence. Instead, the editors argue, migrants’ “differential exposure to death” is an undeniable social fact (p. 1). These deaths are indicative of an intentional, targeted, and productive system of “domination and dispossession” that is facilitated by U.S. imperialism and its virulent racist logics (p. 7). *Migration and Mortality* thus provides readers with a social

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<sup>1</sup> This vignette draws on my own interviews, correspondence, and ethnographic fieldwork at the Pima County Medical Examiner’s Office in Tucson, Arizona in October 2011 and February 2012.

autopsy of this ongoing global disaster while also highlighting and condemning the everyday mechanisms by which this anti-migrant brutality is “normalized, justified, and reproduced” (p. 12).

While the contents of an edited volume can easily become too eclectic, *Migration and Mortality*'s thematically tight focus offers a well-organized book that is hard to put down. The book is divided into four parts, each of which offers a slightly different approach to deconstructing the status quo. Part I examines how humanitarianism, while ostensibly condemning migrant death and suffering, can paradoxically fortify the systems producing this violence. Part II illustrates the productive function of this violence, including the profits to be had from migrant suffering—for instance, from farm hands working beyond their physical capacities in the potentially fatal Florida heat, or from prisoners filling the bed quotas of private immigrant detention centers in New Jersey. The consequences of immigration enforcement and “punitive inclusion” (p. 158) on migrants' health is the focus of Part III, including the physical and psychological trauma that the fear of deportability produces among noncitizen residents.

Drawing on the cases of transmigrants trapped in Mexican border cities, stigmatized deportees living secluded lives in Honduras, and fishermen coping with abusive working conditions shaped by American market forces in Nicaragua, Part IV trains its focus abroad to examine how U.S. state violence is outsourced and externalized beyond the nation's territorial boundaries. The volume ends on a hopeful note, however, with an empirical chapter that examines the strikingly creative ways that migrants navigate the “weaponized migrant trail” (p. 260)—such as a Honduran man's *testimonio* about how he evaded border agents' suspicion by casually waving at them as he rode his bike right through a checkpoint.

Because of the denaturalizing work it does, this book would serve as an excellent teaching tool in a graduate or advanced undergraduate course at the intersection of migration studies and the sociology of death. Indeed, the book's thoughtful structure organically lends itself to a course

organized around the four parts described above. Alternatively, *Migration and Mortality* could be the basis of a module in a thematically broader course about racial capitalism and death. The discussion of Maya migration from Guatemala (Chapter 2) and the plight of Miskitu fishermen in Nicaragua (Chapter 12) provide opportunities to teach about the ways that settler-colonialism structures indigenous migrants' and non-migrants' experiences today. Also, the volume's methodological range—from ethnography to the collection of biometric data to the analysis of documents acquired through FOIA requests—can prompt facilitated discussions about research design, data collection, and research ethics, particularly in the context of studying vulnerable populations and sensitive topics.

*Migration and Mortality* is also noteworthy for bringing Orlando Patterson's concept of “social death” and Avery Gordon's evocative language around “haunting” and “ghosts” to bear on the sociology of migration. Those who manage to survive weaponized border crossings often must endure the loss of social connectedness, identity, and personhood. As their labor is commodified and their lives instrumentalized, the state makes migrant social death possible (and indeed, likely) through illegalization (Chapter 4), detention (Chapter 5), and stigma (Chapter 11), as well as the “enforced morbidity” (p. 147) accompanying the fear of deportation (Chapters 7 and 8), terrible working conditions (Chapters 6 and 12), and neoliberalized health care (Chapter 9).

At the same time, however, the violence responsible for migrant death and dehumanization cannot be contained or concealed. The dead, the disappeared, and the dispossessed *haunt* social life, like ghosts, exposing the cracks and contradictions in repressive systems. One can see, for instance, the absurdity of human rights logics that recognize the “inherent dignity” (p. 24) of migrants, while nonetheless upholding nation-states' right to violently exclude noncitizens (Chapter 1). Similarly, we continue to be haunted by seemingly over-and-done-with violence of the past. The ghosts of the Alamo make themselves felt, for instance, when the modern-day rituals of the U.S. Border Patrol

unashamedly echo the ethos of nineteenth-century U.S. expansionism (Chapter 3). The concepts of social death and hauntings, therefore, provide compelling ways to center violence in the study of contemporary migration. That Patterson's and (to some extent) Gordon's theories were derived from the case study of Black enslavement in the United States is also noteworthy. In effect, *Migration and Mortality* offers readers different ways to reflect on the relationship between past and present forms of racial capitalism.

Paradoxically, all this talk of death can actually be life-affirming. Deaths can "light a spark" (p. 284) and "electrify the living" (p. 11)—just as George Floyd's murder did. Grieving the deaths that society does not consider grievable can be a political act. *Migration and Mortality* insists that we grieve.

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*The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*, by **Bálint Magyar** and **Bálint Madlovics**. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2020. 834 pp. \$49.99 paper. ISBN: 9789633863930.

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Bálint Magyar and Bálint Madlovics's *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework* starts with the premise that political regimes affiliated with the former Soviet Union have implicitly and explicitly been measured against the logic of a western political landscape. What is more, they argue that especially during the early 1990s, political regimes of the former Eastern Bloc have been assumed to be in transition to liberal democratic regimes.

Rejecting this assumption, Magyar and Madlovics offer a new perspective to understanding what they call "post-communist regimes" by offering a Weberian framework through which such regimes can be read and studied. They draw on Max Weber not only for his insights on political sociology, regime theory, and power but mostly for his methodology of the ideal type. Forming ideal types themselves, much of the authors'

argument hinges on the distinction between three ideal typical regimes: liberal democracy, patronal autocracy, and communist dictatorship. Using the work of political sociologist Claus Offe, they argue that in an ideal typical liberal democracy, its political, market, and communal "spheres of social action" are separated and that former regimes of the Eastern Bloc are largely characterized by a lack of separation of such spheres. In conjunction with this prior argument, they further propose that the degree of separation of social spheres largely depends on "civilizational boundaries" established prior to the existence of the Soviet Union and its satellite countries and that the degree of separation is characterized by a "stubbornness" that will not change fundamentally via democratization (or other regime changes, for that matter).

*The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes* proceeds to offer ideal typical categories, based on the regime types laid out in the introductory chapter for various regime-relevant elements, namely the state, actors, politics, the economy, society, and finally regimes themselves. Each of these elements is organized by chapter, and each chapter provides a plethora of ideal typical categories meant to further illuminate and explain relevant dynamics and features of political regimes.

With all this material, Magyar and Madlovics deliver a rich toolkit for the analysis of regimes of the former Eastern Bloc and beyond. I found the strict adherence to Weberian ideal types to be intriguing as well as difficult at times. I found it intriguing because the authors deliver on their promise to make available a large collection of analytical categories fit for analyzing and understanding current dynamics of former socialist countries of the former Eastern Bloc. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes* will be useful to anyone who studies questions of regime change or persistence and who tries to understand political regimes from a Weberian perspective. For example, in Chapter Four, on politics, the authors draw on Weber's concept of legitimacy and explain that, while civil legitimacy can be found at the basis of each regime type, its framework is different and ranges from