

Book reviews

Crossing the Gulf: Love and Family in Migrant Lives. Mahdavi, Pardis, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, (2016, ISBN: 978-0-8047-9883-9).

Pardis Mahdavi sheds light into the misery of domestic carers in Gulf countries but more importantly she shows the awkward and cruel systems in place throughout the bureaucracy

Mahdavi powerfully argues that state policies rarely acknowledge the experiences of migrants, and the laws and policies become hurdles instead of honouring the stated aims – i.e. to protect individuals. It almost appears that laws and regulations are key drivers for illegality and surely they lead to tragedies faced by migrant mothers and their children.

Mahdavi tells the stories of the intimate lives of migrants in the Gulf cities of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Kuwait City. There is abundance of emotions and intimate details and by doing so, Mahdavi shows how trapped can many immigrant workers be. Like some earlier works, Mahdavi also shows us the dark side of migration (and governance) business. Frequent abuses and rapes in domestic care work she reports are at levels nobody wants to hear. This is one clear input of this work: show people what they don't want to hear and see and hope things will change.

Crossing the Gulf is inherently built around the concept of family which is the centre of intimate attention. Although one can see conflicts and tensions much easier here. The stories of separated families though are very strong and shockingly shows us that these experiences are not part of the long forgotten past.

As we keep arguing the blurring lines in the discourse, these are stories of movers and non-movers interactively paddling through insecurities in the hope that they may be freed one day.

The author also fiercely criticises the laws and policies but in some places what she asks for seems vagueness. This may not result in anything better though I would agree with the inadequacy of laws mentioned. One bigger issue here is, she exposes brilliantly, the non-compliance with general rules to protect basic rights and freedoms. The World is closing their eyes on what is going on in the Gulf – and perhaps in many other places.

“Children of the Emir” would probably be the nicest phrase to describe the statuses of also many stateless children who were born to migrant workers: The children often born in jail and often have their abused mothers deported.

She introduces the term “intimate mobility” arguing that this is invisible in the literature and discourses. So people not only move for economic and social mobility but also for intimate mobility. That is to say, people move to get away from families to explore their sexuality. There are vivid examples in the book representing these stories of escape or search for security. Nevertheless, I find it difficult to place in a separate category of intimate mobility as this perfectly fit with moving from places of insecurity to places where relative security is believed to exist no matter it is triggered by sexuality



based insecurities or economic or political insecurities. Families' traditional conservative attitudes force many to leave their homes irrespective of they voice this side of the narratives or not.

Reflecting back on this reading, I would say that Mahdavi's book offer serious qualitative evidence and thus inspires further theory development through conflict model. Mahdavi, while doing a great job in representing the narratives, struggles with finding the suitable theoretical model. This is perhaps due to her focus on Ong's work. She would find conflict model ¹ (Sirkeci, 2006; Sirkeci, 2009; Sirkeci & Cohen, 2016) much more useful in explaining the tensions between governments (i.e. regulating agencies) as well as between individuals and these agencies. Conflict model would help in framing these movers as well as policy mismatches.

The book offers a catalogue of conflict cases from families, households and from detention centres and prisons. These are all building blocks of the conflict model suggesting how all moves are one way or another driven by these tensions, discomforts and fights.

In certain places, the author writes as if there is no literature exist. For example, when she mentions mobility and immobility nexus. She clearly shows the inability of human trafficking framework, as this is one of the goals set by the author.

Nevertheless, this is a fresh view from the field albeit a rattling one for us and hopefully for policy makers in the Gulf and beyond. A must read for those who want to see beyond big numbers.

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Sea of Opportunity: The Japanese Pioneers of the Fishing Industry in Hawaii. Ogawa, Manako. Honolulu, USA: University of Hawai'i Press, (2015, ISBN: 978-0-8248-3961-1).

Manako Ogawa's *Sea of Opportunity* is an excellent study of the history of the Japanese fishing communities of Hawai'i from the late nineteenth century to the recent past. The book locates the history of Japanese fishermen and their families in the context of the wider expansion into the Pacific of fishing and whaling in general and emphasizes the maritime nature of Japanese history; the ocean having long provided Japan with both economic and cultural sustenance. Ogawa asserts that the Japanese fishermen of Hawai'i should not be regarded as merely transplanted communities, like their agricultural compatriots, but seen as the result of a natural, ongoing expansion. Japanese fishermen had long ventured beyond the shores of Japan itself and the scale of this increased following the opening of Japan's doors with the end of isolationism. Making fishermen central to the study, she moves away from the agricentric bias of much of the literature on Japanese communities overseas that has regarded the ocean as an obstacle to be overcome, rather than as a central factor in facilitating migration.

In her opening chapter, Ogawa clearly establishes that Japanese fishing communities had always been highly mobile. The end of isolation and the emergence

¹ Sirkeci, I. (2009). Transnational mobility and conflict. *Migration Letters*, 6(1): 3-14.
 Sirkeci, I. (2006). *The Environment of Insecurity in Turkey and the Emigration of Turkish Kurds to Germany*, New York: Edwin Mellen Press.
 Sirkeci, I. and Cohen, J. H. (2016). Cultures of migration and conflict in contemporary human mobility in Turkey. *European Review*, 24(3): 381-396.

of modern Japan, heralded by the Meiji era beginning in 1868, prompted the emigration of many, particularly those whose livelihood depended on the sea and were able to respond with relative ease to the promise of better returns elsewhere.

The second chapter considers the initial contact between Japanese fishermen and native Hawaiians, the triumph of Japanese fishing methods over those of their Hawaiian rivals, and the establishment of the Japanese fishing industry in the face of hostile white elites. From the arrival of the first Japanese fishermen in 1889, there were incidents of friction and violence between the new arrivals and the native population. Nevertheless, by 1900 there were 50,000 Japanese in Hawai'i constituting 40 per cent of the population. The growth of the industry saw fishermen recruited from Japan and from those Japanese already resident in Hawai'i working in the sugar cane fields. Ogawa reveals that Japanese immigrants successfully established their own companies in contrast to their contemporaries in Canada and mainland USA.

The third chapter outlines the dominance of Japanese fishing during its golden age in the 1920s and 30s, including a detailed account of the actual process of fishing. Ogawa notes that there was a failure to transmit fishing skills intergenerationally and this, by the 1930s, had resulted in an aging workforce. This reflected a desire among the second generation for white-collar and professional jobs in less hazardous, higher status and more lucrative occupations. Ogawa also provides a consideration of the female contribution to the industry, mostly in processing work in the canneries but often in the business of selling and bartering or even in the actual process of fishing itself. Japanese women were also involved in company operations at the decision making level, particularly in family owned businesses. She gives a brief account of Japanese religious practices but does not elaborate on the cultural activities of the community.

The fourth chapter looks at the trials faced during the years of heightened suspicion of a maritime community seen as representative of an expansionist Japan. The suspicion of Japan and its sea going people, specifically operating in Hawaiian waters, saw the suppression of the industry through the introduction of a variety of fishing regulations and prosecution for violations of those regulations. Furthermore, fears of espionage led to bans on Japanese fishing boats for reasons of national security. Pearl Harbor and war meant the complete cessation of all fishing activity by people of Japanese ancestry. Japanese fishermen lost their livelihoods and many their freedom, with some 2,000 interned. The industry was massively curtailed during the war itself. The diktat, "No man of Japanese ancestry shall operate a fishing boat", remained in place until the end of the war and had a detrimental impact on all aspects of the industry, with fish yields declining by 99 per cent during the first year of US involvement in the conflict. Ogawa discusses internment and its consequences and also includes a harrowing description of the experiences of a Hawaiian-born Japanese woman who spent the war years in Japan.

The fifth chapter considers the cultural effects of the war years on Hawai'i's Japanese. Japanese schools were shut, people avoided speaking the language and wearing the Kimono in public, temples and shrines closed and there was a general disassociation with things Japanese. These developments were reversed and cultural practices were revived following the resurgence of the industry after the war.

In the face of an aging first generation and a reluctant second, the sixth chapter outlines post-war attempts to recruit new fishermen from Japan's main islands. These efforts proved to be largely unsuccessful and the recruitment of new blood relied on

migrants from Okinawa. Ogawa includes an intriguing section on the complex relationship that existed between Japanese, Okinawans and the US authorities, which saw the authorities attempt to bolster the differences between the former for their own ends. These developments and the aggressive recruitment of non-Japanese to work the boats saw a multi-ethnic workforce replace a previously mono-ethnic one.

This diversification is considered in the Epilogue, as is the continuity of Japanese practices in fishing, processing, distribution and, indeed, consumption. Since the 1970s, Vietnamese, Koreans, Tongans, Filipinos Indonesians and those of European ancestry have played an increasing role in an industry that remained for so long the preserve of the Japanese.

This book addresses the history of a group whose relationship with place was markedly different from their land-based counterparts, and which, due in part to the relatively small numbers involved, have been rather overlooked. Ogawa highlights the importance of this under considered group by establishing that whereas Japanese agricultural workers, primarily in sugar cane, were economically weak, Japanese fishermen dominated the industry in Hawai'i. In addition, Japanese fishermen in Hawai'i, unlike their counterparts in mainland USA and Canada, maintained their status in an industry that they had largely founded.

Perhaps the study could have benefited from a greater consideration of the nature of Japanese cultural life, along with the ways in which that culture changed and adapted to the new environment. Beyond religion, the culture of the Japanese on Hawai'i is only really considered during its post-war revival.

Ogawa does, however, provide a welcome analysis of the position of women in the fishing business. Although Japanese women in Hawai'i played a minor part in actual fishing, their role was crucial in the processing and distribution of the highly perishable catch. She also suggests that the fishing industry provided opportunities for Japanese women to join their men in their own business ventures in Hawai'i. This contradicts the view that saw women seeking a new life in the USA as an escape from Japanese patriarchy. Again, this was in contrast to agricultural communities and economies based on primogeniture and offering far less financial independence and social autonomy. Ogawa's work suggests a far more complex inter-gender relationship in communities dependent on fishing both in the USA and Japan.

Ogawa's study is interesting, informative and adds much to our understanding of the Japanese diaspora.

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Mexican Migration to the United States. Edited by Harriett D. Romo and Olivia Mogollon-Lopez, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press (2016, ISBN: 978-1-4773-0902-58).

When it comes to migration studies, perhaps the Mexican-US border is the most remarkable in terms of the volume of attention in academia and beyond. Borderlands and borders are important and in my opinion understudied as living spaces. Romo and Mogollon-Lopez compiled a distinguished set of researchers from both sides of this particular border to debate the moves, policies and outcomes.

Like in the case of any other migration corridor, the powerful partner receives more attention; most literature on Mexican migration focuses on the north side of the border. In this volume some key scholars in the field share their research, often based on recent data and scholarship. The edited book successfully makes a point about interconnectedness of migration policy on both sides of the border.

This book offers abundance of empirical evidence to understand implications of migration for labor markets, families and children, and policy making and governance. Although contributors cover a wide array of topics, unauthorised migration constitutes a central component of the debates.

On the one hand several articles in the volume points that overall Mexican migration to the US -unauthorised or not- has been in decline for a while. Like in other emerging market countries, Mexico also developed to a level where outmigration is beaten by immigration and desire to migrate falls. We have seen similar trends in Turkish-German migration corridor too. As Alba in this book alludes to, migration trends from emerging economies have reversed mainly due to levelling of economic opportunities and a degree of stability as the case in Mexico.

In chapters focusing on migration policy and unauthorised migration, the running themes revolve around a rights focused approach. That is evidently the case for recent migration policy developments in Mexico. It is part of the identity debates as well as debates over education and welfare services.

I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised to see Gonzales and Feil have successfully applied the conflict model, on which I spent nearly two decades. Gonzales and Feil richly documented and substantiated the conflict as a driver of migration argument with quantitative models. Operationalisation can be improved but very good for a start. They have reached to a conclusion that networks are part of the game intuitively. That is the idea, we have integrated in the model with my colleague Jeff Cohen in later works: “cultures of migration”.² Feil and González conclude with a quote from my 2006 book³: “environments of insecurity may represent opportunity frameworks utilized by potential migrants but not necessarily by those in greatest danger.” This in fact points to the importance of networks and cultures of migration.

Perhaps one important question the first editor asks at the end, in conclusion chapter, is a crucial one: Is Mexican migration the US different from other migrations? There is the justification of treating Mexican-US migration differently. Unique history of two countries, wars, peace, tensions, discrimination and integration go hand in hand. In this sense, also there are similarities with other cases around the world, in the Balkans, in Asia, in the Middle East. That is another selling point of this volume apart from the fact that it brings together views from the South of the border too.

This collection of articles shows how unique is the case but also revealing the maze of Mexican politics in relation to the US warrants once again transnational collaboration to develop migration policies that will benefit to and make sense for movers and non-movers in countries involved. This book is practically a crash course for those interested in Mexican US migration.

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² Sirkeci and Cohen (2016)

³ Sirkeci (2006)