

Rebecca M. Schreiber, *The Undocumented Everyday: Migrant Lives and the Politics of Visibility*

(Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), pp. xvi + 370, \$30.00, pb.

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In the period after 11 September 2001, Mexican and Central American migrants, driven from their homes by violence and the effects of neoliberal policy, encountered a nightmare in which the US government deployed a 'spectacle of enforcement' to police migrants' movement, along with a range of other 'punitive and carceral practices' (pp. 7–8). In response, a number of projects emerged which invited migrants to document their experience with the idea that a non-migrant audience might then begin to see them as eligible for citizenship and other forms of protection. But the migrants involved in some of these projects challenged the 'liberal tropes of "visibility"' on which these projects were based (p. 4), Rebecca M. Schreiber finds, by creating projects that highlighted their own subjectivity and employed 'counter-representational' practices that challenged their audience to consider alternative ways of belonging (p. 5). Aesthetics and culture are integral to politics, Schreiber wants us to see, and migrant-centred projects have allowed us to envision both new documentary forms and new political futures.

The Undocumented Everyday is divided into three parts with two chapters in each section in which Schreiber thoroughly, though sometimes repetitively, examines a separate documentation project. In Part 1 the author examines two photography projects that allowed migrants to document their lives and communities. Chapter 1 focuses on the Workplace Project, a labour union-sponsored initiative which invited Mexican and Central American migrants to document their everyday existence. Meant to bring visibility to the low-wage, migrant workforce, the project was imagined as a way to challenge nativism in places like Long Island, New York. Chapter 2 explores the 'photographic bridge' Mexican migrants built between Poughkeepsie, New York, and La Ciénega, Oaxaca, which differed from the documentary photography of the Workplace Project in the way it pointed toward 'local and translocal "ways of belonging"', which Schreiber suggests might represent an alternative to 'formalized national membership through "citizenship"' (pp. 80–1).

Redirecting focus to the United States–Mexico borderlands in Part 2, Chapter 3 examines the Border Film Project which documented migration by counterposing images captured by migrants with those captured by the anti-immigrant vigilantes, the Minuteman Project. Schreiber finds the migrants' contributions to the project valuable for the way they worked to 'counter the spectacular coverage of migrant apprehension' and for providing 'forms of counter-knowledge and counter-representation' (p. 122). But by creating a 'visual equivalence' between the migrants

and the Minutemen, Schreiber argues, the Border Film Project 'reproduced the Minutemen's "national" gaze aligned with those of the state', resulting ultimately in a work of 'liberal nativism' (pp. 121, 155).

All of the projects featured in these first three chapters, Schreiber argues, while relating 'migrant self-representation and "visibility"' to empowerment were 'rooted in liberal humanism' and 'informed by neoliberalism', which limited their vision for migrant rights (p. 32). In the next three chapters, on the other hand, Schreiber describes projects coordinated by artists and activists in migrant rights organisations which employed 'a more critical approach to the notion of "visibility"' and even 'engaged in struggles over what constituted the terms of visibility' (p. 33). It is these sorts of projects that Schreiber sees as groundbreaking for both documentary realism and migration politics.

The fourth chapter of the book examines the 2006 film *Maquilápolis: City of Factories* (2006), which centred on the experience of *promotoras* (community activists). Highlighting the activism of women workers within and outside the maquiladoras, Schreiber argues *Maquilápolis* 'contests documentary's claim to "unmediated" representation' and showcases how the *promotoras* were able to use and revise forms of documentary media 'as part of their counter-representational practices' (pp. 160–1).

In the final two chapters Schreiber examines projects which 'call attention to the use of disruption to make visible state practices that were not seen in public spaces' (p. 37). In Chapter 5 Schreiber focuses on a mixed media installation called *Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009* which sought to emphasise the disjuncture between San Francisco's sanctuary city status and the ongoing federal immigration raids following the immigrant rights mobilisations of 2006. One projection drew attention to the contradiction between ongoing state surveillance and immigration raids and local politicians' statements about the city's sanctuary ordinance. Another part of the project featured audio and video which also presented 'counter-spectacle' and 'counter-surveillance', a sort of response to the 'disciplinary gaze of local police and federal immigration authorities' (pp. 212, 220). While Schreiber appropriately highlights how *Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario* exposed the contradictions between the claims politicians made about protecting immigrants and migrants' actual insecurity in the face of federal immigration raids, she also suggests that 'the city had not adequately enforced its sanctuary ordinance' (p. 228). This is a somewhat perplexing claim since San Francisco's ordinance, like those of most other sanctuary cities, merely limits city employees' cooperation and assistance in federal immigration enforcement, but does not claim to shield residents of San Francisco from federal immigration agents. An analysis which goes beyond how politicians' words contradict migrants' experiences to consider how limited the ordinances themselves are would add more nuance to this important discussion.

In the sixth and final chapter Schreiber examines the tactics of undocumented youth activists, which involved employing 'counter-surveillance' and the creation of 'counter-documents' which positioned themselves in opposition to state agents threatening to detain and deport. Just as in the book's earlier chapters, Schreiber is interested in the way migrants' self-representation allows them to revise documentary forms. But unlike those projects built upon liberal ideas that run the risk of re-inscribing 'normative frameworks that limit responses' to injustice, Schreiber believes the undocumented youth and migrant activists have 'created

alternatives to liberal tropes of “visibility” and the state’s differentiation between “deserving” and “undeserving” migrants’ (p. 267).

Overall the six chapters in this book are very useful for the way that they illuminate a different aspect of post-9/11 migrant life at the intersection of art and politics. The ideas that tie these chapters together represent an even more valuable contribution: ultimately, the book makes a compelling case for not separating aesthetics from politics in analyses of art and activism. Schreiber invites scholars and activists to build upon the approach of *The Undocumented Everyday* by ‘both listening for and seeing the connections between their aesthetic and political strategies’ (p. 276), and Schreiber has provided an excellent model for just how to pursue this urgent work.

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Noelle K. Brigden, *The Migrant Passage: Clandestine Journeys from Central America*

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Undocumented transit migration has come to be one of the most criminalised and persecuted forms of migration worldwide. Whether in Europe or across the Americas, media and political discourses have fabricated a hegemonic narrative of undocumented migrants as racialised subjects whose most relevant feature is that they unlawfully traverse national borders, usually aided by smugglers. This narrative has reinforced the idea that they are external menaces to the national security of transit and destination countries and because of this they ought to be controlled and punished. Yet, beyond that biased and oversimplified perspective, much has been left aside regarding the structural causes that produce this type of migration as well as who undocumented migrants are and the everyday struggles they face to survive.

Thus, ethnographically based reflections which contest the hegemonic narrative are needed and welcome. Noelle K. Brigden’s book *The Migrant Passage* draws upon an interdisciplinary approach that emphasises a critical dialogue between international relations and anthropology. She analyses why and how undocumented Salvadorean, Honduran and Guatemalan transit migrants undertake treacherous and uncertain clandestine journeys across the Central American–Mexican–US transit corridor and how this passage is determined by the border politics of neoliberal globalisation.

Constructed from a migrant-centred perspective, the book attempts to understand how the dialectical relationship between autonomous mobility and enforced