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This volume is the second title in a new series published by Bristol University Press under the generic title *Global Migration and Social Change*. In his preface, Nando Sigona, one of the editors (the other editor is Alan Gamlen) explains that the idea of this series emerged in 2016 in the midst of political reactions brought about by the unauthorized border crossings at the southern limits of the European Union, the newly elected president Donald Trump's promise to build an impermeable wall at the US-Mexican border, and the vote of the citizens of the United Kingdom in the referendum to leave the European Union. Against the background of these global processes and macro-social transformations, this volume by Rachel Humphris investigates the most intimate spheres of the social interaction with the street level bureaucracy of the state. The main actors involved in the interactions described and analyzed are the street level social "frontline workers" of the British child protection system and the "Romanian Roma" migrant mothers and their families who are subject to their interventions.

The "frontline workers" are acting on behalf of a legally and bureaucratically complex child protection system, which is growing increasingly restrictive or even oppressive in "post-welfare" Britain. These women, because many of the frontline workers are female, are inspired by genuinely philanthropic sentiments and values, some of them having some migration history of their own. Although situated at the very bottom of the social protection system, they

have received, due to the recent restructuring of local authority, an unwanted authority and responsibility to take "discretionary decisions" with regards to migrant families. As such, they struggle to meet their increasing responsibilities with decreasing resources from the system. This shift is at the core of the transformation of the British state in times of emerging mobility within the enlarged European Union. Located at the very bottom of this system, frontline workers grapple to offer their services to the most marginal EU citizens who enter their jurisdiction.

Their clients belong to the category of "Romanian Roma," which is far from being a homogenous group. Humphris makes clear that this category is socially constructed for the purposes and needs of state bureaucracy. The people who are subsumed under this category come from different parts of Romania, speak different dialects of Romani, and have diverse migration experiences living in different European or Latin American countries prior to their arrival to Britain. Their legal statuses vary, from being totally invisible to the administration, through having different degrees of recognition with or without national insurance numbers, social and housing benefits, to being registered as self-employed with permits for unlimited stay. The legal basis for these migrants' entrance into the orbit of the social system is most often connected to their children. Roma women are subject to the attention of social workers mainly for being mothers. The main channel through which they

enter the purview of frontline workers is connected to the local Roma Pentecostal Church. The pastor and the volunteers of this church help to render visible the previously “invisible Roma” to the local child protection workers.

The volume is divided in two main parts, each consisting of three chapters. The first three chapters present the field from alternate perspectives. Starting with the shifting positions of the researcher, continuing with the positions of the frontline workers, and then turning to the position of the migrants, and how they are perceived in the host country. These chapters set the scene and the analytical angle of the approach. Part two, consisting of chapters four, five and six, analyzes in detail the encounters between the actors involved, how the interactions play out, and how the state is reproduced through these interactions. These chapters describe and interpret the scenarios of the racialized and gendered social hierarchies and the process of social bordering which are built into these encounters. Finally, a concluding chapter reminds the reader how the encounters with the state in the intimate domestic sphere influence the everyday lives of the families engaged in these encounters. It also revisits the understanding of citizenship and conceptions of bonding and social care.

The book was built on research that used anthropological methods. Rachel Humphris carried out long-term fieldwork in Luton (not far from London) during 2013 and 2014. She lived in the homes of different Roma families, learning the Romani language, and sharing the everyday hardships and joys with the participants in her research. Still the resulting book is not an anthropological monograph in the classical sense, because it does not aim to cover all aspects of the life of a population, group, or “people.” Rather it is focused on the “intimate encounters” between the state, as represented by the frontline workers, and the Roma mothers and their families. Through the methodological window of

these encounters we learn not only about the lives of the migrants, but probably even more, about the way the state bureaucracy operates. The book is packed with analytical insights into ideas of citizenship and its connection to moral values, and how preconceptions about race, gender shape, guide, and inspire everyday interactions.

The “encounter” is a central concept framing both the research methodology and the analysis. Focusing on the encounters as part of the methodology enables the author to highlight that her shifting positions are always situationally embedded in the interactions she was involved in. Living with a certain family at one point, she was seen as a friend or even sister of the Roma women, while the frontline workers perceived her as an outsider with a special status within the families and they were also aware of her work as a doctoral student. They, or their colleagues, also turned into research participants at a different moment when Humphris visited their office for a more formal interview. Distinguishing between the situations or even keeping the different roles apart is a crucial skill for the ethnographer. She could not act as an agent of the “system” within the families nor could she freely share her observations or exchanges with the mothers. While situations of this kind are not unknown to anthropologists, and the ethical aspects of the fieldwork must always prevail, the nature of this research foregrounded them even more. Moreover, Humphris states clearly (p. 27) that she consciously decided not to include in her book events and stories about the families which might further stigmatize or marginalize them but only to use them to inform her analysis and understanding.

Analytically the concept of “intimate encounter” is utilized in multiple ways. At the most practical level most of the interactions between the Roma mothers and the frontline workers are described and can be understood as exchanges during visitations to the homes of the Roma. A general preconception about the “Romanian



Roma” suggests to the social workers that home visits are the only effective way to check and assist these families, since they are not willing to come to their offices or keep appointment dates. Humphris points out that visits to the homes of the poor or marginal have a long social history in Britain where interactions initiated by members of the upper classes usually took the form of visitations. Today these “intimate encounters” have also become part of the prevailing system of state surveillance. The ethnographical details offered by the book are among the finest illustrations of how the securitization and surveillance of recent migration controls operate on the ground in Europe.

There is yet another level of encounters, the confrontations of values, conceptions, and different worldviews. There are clearly different expectations by the volunteers or frontline workers regarding how migrant mothers and their spouses should conform to their ideas of a good life. These values inspired by middle-class values, education about child development, or gender roles or by working patterns characteristic of the mainstream might clash with practices and situations observed during the home encounters. The ethnography of the encounter between these different worlds is never reduced to simple interpretations by the author (for example invoking “culture” as explanation). Instead she reveals in detail the differences and their underlying practical multifaceted and often highly morally charged aspects. Divergences from the expectations can result in perception of the family as “undeserving” or the labeling of the mothers as “despicable,” and in extreme cases referring the family to authorities who might enact rules for “child safeguarding,” taking away their children.

While the historical moment, the topic of the book, and a good part of the sources of its analysis could make it an example of “dark anthropology” (Ortner 2016), this volume is about more than exposing the injustices and inhumanities of an ever-present

bureaucracy and pervasive surveillance and the vulnerability of the marginal in the face of the governmentality adopted by the post-welfare state. The protagonists are depicted as real human actors with their values and moral dilemmas, and even if most of the encounters are focused on the reproduction of marginality, the racialization and the discrimination of Roma migrants, there are glimmers of hope about humanity in the text. The brief interludes inserted between the chapters act as reminders that other aspects of life, which could not be easily captured in a focused analysis, are always present.

The volume can be recommended to anybody interested in the dynamics of mobility within the European Union. It provides a major contribution to the understanding of the “governance of marginality” at the grassroots. It can provide a rich case study to scholars and students in social work, social policy, migration studies, sociology, and social anthropology.



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