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Mobile Entrepreneurs: An Ethnographic Study of the Migration of the Highly Skilled. By Katrin Sontag. Opladen, Germany: Budrich UniPress, 2018. Pp. 171. \$55.00 (paper).

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in Asia and Africa and in the globalizing multilingual media and pedagogical products of American antiabortion and abstinence-only programs. Meanwhile, the reverse flows of money and resources produced by vulnerability geopolitics overseas are traveling back and implicitly shaping American politics.

Oliviero's vulnerability theory is a timely successful reconceptualization of the American cases of precarity and insecurity; it waits for future researchers to examine the theory's applicability in explaining other American and global culture wars. A wide range of sociological courses featuring theory, culture, religion, politics, social movements, gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and emotions can easily find select chapters to interest their students, many of whom also comprise the vulnerable precariat. Beyond academia, Oliviero's critiques of the progressive vulnerability presumptions equip the social actors with practical strategies for the next decade with increasing unpredictability. The progressive vulnerability playbook awaits the verification of praxis.

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The genesis of groups has been a part of sociology at least since Durkheim asked his famous question, "How do social groups form and how do they hold together?" and followed this with his equally famous dictum that social facts, like the existence of groups, can only be explained by other social facts. As a research site, however, social grouping, the creation and rise to prominence of new groups, or more generally "group formation" as the emergence of new social entities and categorizations, remains of marginal interest in comparison to the big four categorizations: class, race, gender, and sexuality. Unlike these, group formation is not a specialty in the sociological field. Unlike these, there are no job bank listings for sociologists of group formation. Unlike these, there are no journals, conferences, or ASA sections devoted to the phenomenon, although, as Katrin Sontag's detailed study suggests, perhaps there should be.

Mobile Entrepreneurs is an ethnographic and interview-based study conducted in Switzerland that, through a novel use of biographical methods, explores an emergent social group—"highly skilled startup entrepreneurs"—constituted by individuals who populate global cities, who move between projects and spaces with rapidity, who "never stop working," who often seem placeless, who are nevertheless always connected, and whose common characteristics in many ways elude the big four categorizations and, by the same token, categorization as a coherent migrant group. In this book, Sontag raises important questions for migration studies and

demonstrates how the genesis of groups, finding new groups, and developing new categorizations, can bear sociological fruit, in equal measure analytical and political.

Sontag argues that “startup entrepreneurs are not a group in the classical sense of people of a similar occupation trade or expertise, but rather a group of people in a similar professional function: founding and leading a business” (pp. 20–21). This professional function, an established pursuit in the era of venture capital, has a “connecting effect” according to Sontag, and she describes many layers of peculiarity and commonality: the overlapped experiences, traits, and motives that make highly skilled startup entrepreneurs a group that cannot be captured by the “(predefined) settings” of the big four categorizations nor by recognized forms of “ethnicity, culture [and] immigration” (p. 35).

Arguably, the most radical conclusion that Sontag reaches is to “[drop] the word ‘migration’” from being applicable to this group, because “the people I met did not relate to it” (p. 111). Sontag instead finds the group’s preferred nomenclature to be “global people,” which resonates with the group-based trait that Sontag calls “*passung*” or “meaningful self-production [through] compatibility, fit, matching” (p. 93). In different ways, ranging from the use of urban space, to modes of self-understanding, to work/leisure practices, Sontag finds *passung* to be indelible to the globe-trotting startup entrepreneurs’ essential being-in-the-world. Such deeply rooted and common traits only become recognizable, however, if we “[choose] the perspective of profession rather than ethnicity or locality” to understand *who* this group is and *how* it migrates. This quickly explodes the category of migration and demands attention to “mobility” instead (p. 127). Sontag makes a convincing case that accurate categorization of startup entrepreneurs as *mobiles* rather than *migrants* makes an analytic difference by “[cutting] across established categories or dichotomies . . . to capture globalizing people, communities and pathways . . . practices and subjectivities” (p. 123). And yet a significant ambiguity appears in Sontag’s argument at this point, and it concerns the political double side of analytic clarity.

As Sontag carefully elucidates the highly skilled startup entrepreneur over the course of the book, it becomes increasingly relevant to ask whether this is, in fact, a group “on paper” or a group “in reality.” In other words, what is the difference between Sontag’s academic taxonomy and the *practical* taxonomy of the group itself? There must at least be a relation between the two. Sontag skillfully draws together the traits shared by the group, yet it requires another step for this group to possess collective status, particularly since the simplest mechanism of social cohesion (copresence) does not apply to them. One way to answer this question would be to concentrate on the source of commonality itself, what Sontag calls the “startup space.” This part of the argument (chap. 8), however, tends to be backgrounded in favor of close discussion of subtle traits that Sontag herself uses to adroitly paint the group in a collective portrait.

A difference persists between academic and practical taxonomies in this respect, and it seems crucial to the reframing of migration that Sontag proposes,

although it goes largely undiscussed. In fact, she tends to conflate the academic and the practical on several occasions, and it is not clear whether the value added of her analysis comes in the form of an accurate categorization or in her advocacy for highly skilled startup entrepreneurs to be recognized as distinct from other migrant classes.

Mobile Entrepreneurs reminds one of Luc Boltanski's classic study of *The Making of a Class: Cadres in French Society*, where he makes the important point that nation-states govern according to the classifications *they* recognize and that all too often sociologists "see like a state" because they use only state-approved classifications, taxonomies, and categorizations. This makes the sociological distinction between a group on paper and a group in reality significant because it simultaneously involves *political* efforts to achieve or prevent group recognition. Cadres in French society were successful in getting this recognition. The larger point is that academic taxonomy (e.g., "cadres," "startup entrepreneurs," "the precariat") *will* play a role in enabling, maintaining, or preventing such recognition whether sociologists want it to or not.

The fact that *Mobile Entrepreneurs* could have this impact for *this* group suggests not only the appeal and strength of the study but also the appeal of the genesis of groups as one of the most direct ways in which sociology obtains political relevance. While Sontag does not discuss classification struggle specifically, the rich detail she provides of mobile startup entrepreneurs echoes Durkheim's original point that classification can serve as both the end of social knowledge and the start of political action.

Religious Statecraft: The Politics of Islam in Iran. By Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. Pp. xiv+378. \$60.00 (cloth); \$30.00 (paper).

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During the final months of the 1978–79 Iranian revolution, domestic media circulated reports of throngs of people claiming to see the face of the exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini appear on the moon. I occasionally hear the story recounted by Iranians as evidence of how blind superstition and belief in religious authority led the revolution astray. Yet the rumors of celestial charisma were not interpreted by all actors in the same manner at the time. It turns out that one's political strategy may have influenced one's lunar proclivities. The Iranian Communist Party's underground newspaper *Navid* eagerly proclaimed the collective effervescence as a sign of Durkheimian zeal against the Pahlavi monarchy: "A few pipsqueaks cannot deny what a whole nation has seen with its own eyes." Conversely, the newspaper *Etela'at*, which leaned toward the Islamist followers of Khomeini during the final