

tremendous ingenuity and flexibility of capitalism enable us to live on this planet with nine billion people. Obviously, it results in gross environmental destruction and the current situation in which our planet simply cannot sustain the pleasant life of so many of us, and of the “readers of his book” in particular. But there is no “back to nature”. Nor does Stoll put his money on the environmental movements, which, in his view, are highly fragmented. They are no match for corporate capitalism, which has resulted in “a handful of gigantic multinational corporations, answerable only to shareholders, [which] now dominate many areas of the global economy” (p. 224). The scale and concentration of the oil industry, as well as the food industry for that matter, have created a capitalism that, according to Stoll, is no longer capitalism but a set of monopolies or at least oligopolies.

So, is there any hope? Paradoxically, it is neoliberalism itself that has put a brake on consumer capitalism, Stoll argues. Material consumption has lagged as middle and lower incomes stagnated in the wealthiest countries of this world. Since the 1970s, the world has changed less than in the fifty years before, since clothing, food, transport, and our daily necessities did not change that much. What we have seen is an information revolution, which is not material. While consumer capitalism is changing, old industries have invested heavily in their polluting practices, and the fossil fuel industry in particular is a case in point. Breaking up these and other huge corporations, with their tremendous political power, would be a first step towards a steadfast introduction of renewable energy, Stoll advises. Indeed, he expects more from governmental anti-trust regulations – like those enacted by the American government more than a hundred years ago, in the gilded age – than from consumer or environmental movements.

The book is clearly intended for a general readership and focuses heavily on American realities. It does little to engage with different academic strands that scrutinize capitalism as a historical phenomenon. On the other hand, it provides us with a well-organized overview of the themes in the history of capitalism. Above all, it offers us a view, both disturbing and welcome in equal measure, on how neoliberal capitalism has splintered social cohesion, including religious and environmental consciousness.

**Ulbe Bosma**

International Institute of Social History and Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

E-mail: [ubo@iisg.nl](mailto:ubo@iisg.nl)

doi:10.1017/S0020859023000482

Migrations d'élites. Une histoire-monde XVIe–XXIe siècle. Ed. by Marianne Amar and Nancy L. Green. [Migrations.] Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, Tours 2022. 304 pp. € 26.00.

In recent years, economists, geographers, and sociologists have written extensively about “expatriates” or “highly skilled migrants”, conceived as new categories of

migrant, who move abroad as part of upper-class careers. More recent research focuses on other forms of “privileged migrations”, such as Western retirees or students from the Global South. This volume, edited by Marianne Amar and Nancy Green, presents elite migration as a structural phenomenon that has taken various forms over time, rather than as a trend caused by recent economic globalization. It contributes to our understanding of elite migrations by providing very different examples of how emigration either maintains or reinforces dominant social positions – or is associated with downward mobility.

One of the main choices made by the editors is the historical and geographical scope of the book. There are twelve chapters, divided into four parts. The first covers the modern era, the second covers the nineteenth century, and the last two parts cover the twentieth century. The migratory trajectories span Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Central Asia. Elite migrations thus offer a great opportunity to study history on a global scale, what the authors call *histoire-monde*. However, the cases studied are predominantly European and relate mainly to contemporary history.

Another significant feature of the book is the importance of the individual level in the description and analysis. Global processes have sometimes been studied in overly abstract texts and metaphorical concepts. It is certainly not the case here. This volume offers a social history filled with detailed narratives, portraits, and biographies. This approach is reflected in the sources used, which prominently feature letters, memoirs, and even interviews for more recent periods. The history of elite migrations provides the opportunity to observe and describe the interconnected world from the individual’s point of view.

It would be pointless to summarize the book. Instead, I will try to highlight some central ideas or recurring observations. To begin with what may seem like a paradox, elite migrants appear vulnerable to a certain extent. Like all migrants, they have to endure the difficulties associated with travelling long distances or being away from home. In the book’s first contribution, Antonella Romano paints a melancholic portrait of Matteo Ricci, a Jesuit priest whose journey to China has no return. But there is a specific fragility associated with elites. Because they have more resources, they also have more to lose. While some elite migrants succeed, the book also portrays many others who experience difficult exile, loneliness, idleness, or destitution. The Italian aristocrats described by Catherine Brice, for example, benefit from their connections when they flee abroad, but they cross borders as clandestine individuals with forged documents. They then had to settle successfully in a foreign country, which not all of them managed. One of the Gigliogi brothers, from a wealthy family, commits suicide after failing to establish himself as a professor in Strasbourg. This fragility is further highlighted in the last chapter – written by a sociologist – which describes a publicly funded programme which is supposed to welcome scientists to France who can no longer continue their work in their home countries – an initiative that must reject many applicants.

However, most elites manage to make good use of their resources. These migrations are characterized by the importance of strategies, i.e. the more or less conscious efforts individuals make to maintain or improve their social status. From this perspective, the ties, communities, and sociability of elite migrants appear central. The ability to

transport, find, or reproduce social capital abroad seems to be a crucial indicator of success or failure. Whether it is foreign students, eighteenth-century musicians, or Armenian elites fleeing the genocide, all these migrants seek to “anchor themselves in exile societies” (p. 244). It should be noted that these societies are often national in nature: elite migrants also seek the protective dynamics of the diaspora. What sets them apart from other migrants is that these diasporas remain socially closed. It is the other elites that all these migrants are looking for, so as not to lose their status.

A final point that stands out in the book is the importance of the state. Firstly, because the most tragic political events determine many of the departures abroad: revolutions; conflicts; genocides; the great stages of imperialist expansion, all give the measure of these elite migrations. In this way, political events appear to be something more than the “froth” of which Fernand Braudel spoke, since they have a lasting effect on individual lives. The final section of the book addresses the classic question of post-war situations through the original lens of elite migration. In the penultimate chapter, Marianne Amar describes the unenviable fate of skilled workers among the “displaced persons” in Germany after World War II. Many of these former elites are regarded as “hardcore refugees”: displaced persons whom no one knows what to do with, unable to regain the employment and status they once enjoyed.

The state also plays a more active and structural role: state agents constantly define the contours of the “good migration”. Civil servants and bureaucrats classify, sort out, welcome, or reject migrants. Eighteenth-century Italian musicians could perform in European capitals, and see their careers take off, only if they had an invitation from a prince, a secretary of state, or a letter of recommendation from a diplomat. In Françoise Blum’s chapter, we see how African students were welcomed in Paris in the 1950s, because, in the eyes of French political power, they represented the future of the world. Sylvie April shows the shift in the way French political elites viewed those who went abroad: associated with the old figure of the émigré and perceived as potential traitors in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century they became representatives of a “greater France”, called upon to compensate for demographic decline and the gradual loss of the colonies. This led the political authorities to encourage the development of associations and institutions to support and represent them.

The history of elite migration, then, presents a different picture of migration from the one that has prevailed over the past two decades through the “transnationalist” approach, as Nancy Green has already pointed out in a recent book.<sup>1</sup> The “transnationalist” approach to migration studies has emphasized the ability of migrants to escape the power of states, to transcend in part the national world order. One might then assume that elite migrants would be able to do this even more easily. But the power of these elites always seems to be linked, in one way or another, to political power. In fact, states and elites appear to be in a relationship of codependence, which is quite different from the relationship of control/resistance that is established between poor migrants and states.

Not addressed in this book are other ways of looking at elite migration, which could help us understand the place of elites within social hierarchies, or social hierarchies

<sup>1</sup>Nancy L. Green, *The Limits of Transnationalism* (Chicago, IL, 2019).

themselves. The question of social class appears through the resources or support available to individuals, but very little in the conflict between social classes. These elite migrants seem quite distant from other social categories. Where are the other migrants, where are the working classes? Is the social distance so great that they never cross paths? There is reason to believe that they did, that there are indeed concrete relationships between elite migrants and others, and that these relationships produce perceptions and representations. Comparative data could be of great help in achieving this.

The empirical richness of the book and the diversity of the cases covered also have some drawbacks. It is difficult to follow those authors who do not introduce the subject of their research clearly enough, or who use an inaccessible writing style. There is sometimes a lack of connection between chapters and parts. The introduction is clear and interesting, but might have benefited from being a little longer – or perhaps there should have been transitions between the parts, or a conclusion. For example, the book remains focused on Europe, and even Western Europe – although this Western Europe is made up of arrivals and departures. Why is that? Is there a European specificity to these elite migrations? This European centrality is not a problem in itself, but it deserves more justification and discussion. The link between political power, elite migration and political power, which appears throughout the chapters, could have been more clearly problematized.

These comments in no way detract from the quality of the book, which should be seen as an excellent introduction to the history of elite migration, using specific historical cases. It shows the great diversity of historical configurations that produce elite migration. The connotations of contemporary vocabulary still oppose “migrants” and “elites”. This book shows, on the contrary, that migration is an ordinary part of the life of the dominant class, as a factor of stabilization and reproduction, particularly in the face of the vagaries of history. It should appeal to anyone interested in migration, the history of elites, or simply social history.

**Vincent Hugoo**

Centre Européen de Sociologie et de Sciences Politiques, Paris, France

E-mail: [vincent.hugoo@gmail.com](mailto:vincent.hugoo@gmail.com)

doi:10.1017/S0020859023000494

Pursuing Empire. Brazilians, the Dutch, and the Portuguese in Brazil and the South Atlantic, c.1620–1660. Ed. by Cátia Antunes. [European Expansion and Indigenous Response, vol. 41.] Brill, Leiden and Boston (MA) 2023. xii, 213 pp. € 103.55; £95.00. (E-book: € 103.55; £95.00.)

The study of Atlantic history for several decades has reconfigured how historians study empires in the early modern period, primarily by focusing on how people, ideas, and goods crossed borders and contributed to the creation of an increasingly