As a political ideograph (McGee 1980), the <migrant> can be thought of as an abstract concept which is mapped onto and by competing ideologies with variant discursive and material resources. The different categories which are used to b/order human and nonhuman life (e.g. class, gender, ability, race, etc.) all come together to classify migrants as “belonging” or otherwise. In the past few decades, these classifications have been refined, intensified, and catapulted through criminal justice systems around the world. Bosworth, Parmar and Vázquez’s edited volume, *Race, Criminal Justice, and Migration Control*, provides a critical intervention in the criminalisation of migrants focusing particularly on how race participates in these practices. Split into four main parts, the authors of the chapters that make up this volume explore how race gets produced and consumed through discursive and material borders, policing, laws and courts, and prisons, including deportation centres and all the corresponding legal procedures. The field of “crimmigration” casts a wide net, as such the book should appeal to migration and legal scholars across disciplines.

The claim that the border is everywhere has become all too common in migration and border studies. This is a tricky claim to make as it follows that if borders are everywhere, they are nowhere, they collapse onto their own imagined spatial universality. The authors of the first section on “Race, Borders, and Social Control” avoid this pitfall by documenting empirically the material practices which make up borders through particular experiences. For example, in examining border controls of Filipina domestic workers in Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong, Maggy Lee, Mark Johnson and Mike McCahill’s chapter describes an entire industry that seeks to produce the optimal migratory care worker through different surveillance regimes that are already at work in the Philippines, en route, and in the countries of their employment, specifically their homes of employment and in public spaces. In her chapter, Gabriella Sanchez challenges mainstream representations of “smugglers” in the
United States as implicitly male, criminal, and foreign. Through her ethnographic work she charts informal economies that are opened up by regimes of border control, noting that women also partake in this kind of gendered labour which does not always translate into profit-driven motives. Lirio Gutiérrez Rivera’s chapter anchors the experience of Honduran women and children seeking refuge in the United States in the historical relationship between the two countries, noting that these productions of race and gender factor into contemporary migration politics, of which Mexico also plays a big factor in reinforcing. Together, the chapters in this section do exemplary work in showcasing the border being materialised through legal structures, formal and informal economies which produce race and various other categorical intersections such as class, gender, and sexuality.

The figure of the migrant is constructed legally as the citizen’s other. This deceptive binary frame spectralises the spatiality of citizenship as a differentiated legal construct which re-produces notions of race. The second section on “Race, Policing, and Security” works through various iterations of this argument to show how different groups of people factor into the racialised binary framework of producing strangers. Ben Bowling and Sophie Westenra provide a conceptual overview of policing as an overarching surveillance regime which relies on racial archetypes to enforce migration laws in the UK. Working in an under-researched geography, Sanja Milivojević provides an account of the racialised, classed, and gendered ways in which migrants are stratified while crossing through the Western Balkans (Serbia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, and Kosovo); her findings are based on interviews and participant observation with local NGOs which are sutured with media analysis of the criminalisation of migrants. Louise Boon-Kuo provides a nuanced analysis of how race factors into the policing of “street-based” migration in Australia; far from being race-neutral, Boo-Kuo’s analysis shows policing to be detrimental to migrants of colour and citizens alike. Along the same lines, Parmar’s analysis of policing in the UK shows how historical trajectories of empire and nationalism come together in policing practices of minority ethnic groups. This section provides excellent analyses of policing as it is linked to imperial practices of race making, both historical and contemporary. These chapters disturb the easily assumed connections
made between citizenship and justice, instead opting for a critique that examines critically the state’s role in the surveillance of citizenship which is being enforced through juridical structures.

Seeking to provide a holistic story of the ways in which racialisation factors into criminal justice structures, the authors turn to legislative and legal processes in courts in the third section of the book, “Race, Courts, and the Law”. Through interviews with Birmingham criminal courts’ staff and close readings of related Court of Appeals decisions in the UK, Ana Aliverti demonstrates how criminal litigation relies on “culture” to justify social hierarchies, racial stereotypes, and criminal characteristics which are ascribed to migrants. In the same geography, Eddie Bruce-Jones examines the pedagogy of refugee law, arguing that refugee law operates on a crisis model which entrenches exceptional and individualised forms of suffering thus turning “humanitarianism” into a bordering mechanism that situates individuals into categories of “deserving” or “undeserving” of legal protections. Some of these entrenched notions, Bruce-Jones argues, can be disrupted through critical pedagogical work in the classroom. Seeking to understand Latinidad as it is constructed through migration laws and policies, Vázquez underscores the ways in which “Latinos” have been discursively positioned as “inferior”, “temporary labourers”, and “criminal aliens” thus fortifying immigration laws which reinforce racial inequality. Through close readings of judicial decisions and interviews with immigrants and immigrant justice organisations, Jennifer Chacón and Susan Coutin examine how legal doctrine and practices rely on the category of “national origin” to dismiss claims of racial discrimination in immigration enforcement practices. After reading this section, a structural story begins to emerge of how different yet interconnected “sites” of border control come together to create what could be termed the “crimmigration-industrial complex” which works to link prisons to this critical conversation.

Focusing on different sites of border control, the book makes a final turn to the prison, the immigration detention centre, and deportation processes. The three chapters in this section, “Race, Detention, and Deportation”, examine how race and racism are produced through policy documents and in the everyday interactions between migrants and detention
staff. Hindpal Bhui challenges salient discursive practices which frame Muslim migrants as threatening figures, sexual predators, symbols of gender inequality, and violent extremists; Bhui’s critique advocates for prison policy to draw on more informed data about Muslim populations in Britain in order to do the educational/training work that needs to be done to improve relations between prison staff and foreign and Muslim prisoners. Based on observations and interviews with immigration removal centre staff, Bosworth examines how race and racism factor into different scales from the structural to the everyday interactions between guards and detainees in such highly racialised spaces; she notes that racial stereotypes help officers make sense of their work, surveillance, discipline, and sometimes their responsibility of care. Tanya Golash-Boza critically interrogates deportation as it is structurally interwoven with racialised and gendered patterns of policing, targeting and impacting mostly black and Latino men during the deportation proceedings as well as in their countries of origin. Finally, Emma Kaufman’s epilogue closes the book drawing on the common theme of all the chapters which, for her, seek to highlight and disturb the close relationship between citizenship and race, as well as gender and sexuality.

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Adding the suffix “industrial complex” to societal structures seems to instantly add weight to academic critique (e.g. military-industrial complex, NGO-industrial complex, prison-industrial complex, medical-industrial complex, etc.). Ascribing the term “crimmigration-industrial complex” to the evidence the chapters in this book provide is done with careful consideration noting the overuse of said suffix and its over-emphasis on connections. In using this term, I wish to make a rhetorical distinction useful for critical analysis: industrial complexes are dependent on both their connections and disjunctures; the practices that contribute to the production of the “criminal migrant” subjectivity may or may not be in communication with one another. This focus on disjunctures of crimmigration practices comes from an initial critique of the disconnected nature of the chapters: they are individual
chapters that attempt to communicate with one another from their own particular sites, sometimes leaving the reader to infer many of the themes germinating from their analyses. After some reflection, this critique turned into a valuable lesson this book implicitly provides: crimmigration is a multi-sited structural practice consisting of connections and disjunctures which produces migrants based on regressive and exclusionary models of race, gender, sexuality, and various other intersectional constructs that are deployed alongside criminality.

Geographically, the book is well represented but further work is encouraged to address gaps in knowledge production about crimmigration as a spatial concept. First, the concept of the Global South deserves critical scrutiny because it leads scholars to divide the world into arbitrary geographical coordinates that escape analyses of capital accumulation and dispossession within the vastness of such imagined geographies (i.e. Global South, North, East, West, etc.). There is an overemphasis in the book on migrations from the “Global South” to the “Global North” (United States and Europe). This is not to diminish the importance of such analyses, but heavy migration patterns within, for example, China and South America deserve attention yet these national and transnational geographies remain absent from analysis and critique. This observation goes beyond the simple critique of what the authors did not include; indeed, Lee, Johnson, and McCahill’s chapter speaks to how crimmigration includes phenomena not directly linked to capital in Europe or the United States; and Milivojević’s chapter highlights the importance of studies in under-researched geographies by locally embedded researchers. However, a focus on South America, for example, would add more spatial complexity to how Latinidad is produced and consumed in geographies outside of the United States. Latinidad factors as a racial construct in the book’s chapters, yet it is legally an ethnicity in the United States. Such reflection is necessary so as to avoid drawing Latinidad as antithetical to whiteness, which is not always the case, especially considering its historical links to European slavery and colonialism and its racialised contemporary deployments to actively exclude black and indigenous peoples of the Americas (Colque and Tundama 2016; Palou 2014). Moreover, taking seriously the spatiality of crimmigration, as it pertains to Latinidad, for example, opens an opportunity to question
the politics that produce racial and ethnic subjectivities both together and separately. The question speaks to another side of Stuart Hall’s (cited in Gunaratnam 2003: 4) argument which emphasises the discursive and material imbrication between race and ethnicity. In other words, the questions I am asking here are: How are race and ethnicity as legal constructs not imbricated? And do these disjunctures signal any political potentialities useful to unsettle discriminatory deployments of structural categories such as race and ethnicity?

Second, the pool of scholars contributing to crimmigration studies needs to be radically diversified, beyond disciplinary representation. With the exception of a few contributors, most of the chapters come from legal scholars who work in law schools in “western” countries. There are theoretical consequences one must consider; several chapters written by legal scholars centre their scholarship around or against positivist paradigms, those that seek to gain legitimacy by claiming objectivity. These chapters work to dispel the myth that immigration laws are “race-neutral”, a term meant to stand for objectivity. But this argument needs to be pushed further: it labours the obvious. Legal structures are inherently subjective, reflections of the space-times that produced them – including their respective ideologies about race and other social constructs. The suggestion I am making here is to decentre positivist paradigms from the central arguments. Decentring requires engagement with such paradigms but their value becomes tangential to the overarching intellectual labour, which needs to include transdisciplinary work beyond the academy. There are also consequences that need to be considered in the kind of empirical scholarship that is produced; Bhui’s chapter, for example, provides dexterous analysis of how Muslims are racialised in the UK prison system, yet this analysis is in the service of improving relations between guards and prisoners instead of working towards more radical potentialities, prison abolition being one of them. This would entail systematic dismantling of the structures that make prisons possible, those very structures that make crimmigration possible. This is not to devalue Bhui’s work – symptoms of structural problems need immediate and well-informed solutions – yet legal scholars in crimmigration studies also need to engage revolutionary discourses in “reform vs. revolution” debates. Activist Mariame Kaba
(http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/) and geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore (for a primer interview, see Kushner 2019), for example, provide pragmatic political economic critiques that can be engaged to work towards more radical prison abolitionist futures in their respective legal geographies.

In conclusion, I think of Bosworth’s (p.v) lovely book dedication: “For Anthony with whom I’ve become a migrant.” As a former “illegal immigrant” in the United States, my challenges to Bosworth and all the crimmigration scholars inside and outside this volume are to become illegal migrants; to work through and from abject, criminal, and radical axiological subjectivities; and to continue challenging contemporary deployments of citizenship, an endeavour to which Brandzel (2016) provides further useful insights. For me, the <illegal migrant> here is proposed not as an undifferentiated ideograph but rather as a “smuggler” helping to shift between de- and anti-citizenship work that is necessary to dismantle prisons and their related structures of criminality. Moreover, these challenges are meant to incite the necessary conversations around the phrase “no human is illegal”. This is not to deny the principled stance engendered in that phrase but rather to push for radical critiques of illegality as a material construct that is deployed by juridical structures which, indeed, methodically make certain humans “illegal” in particular space-times (Nair 2012). Overall, the book contributes in-depth and valuable critical analyses of crimmigration as a practice legally imbricated with discriminatory notions of race. Further work is encouraged to dislodge juridical structures from citizenship as a stratified spectrum that begins with the exclusion of its other, in the instances the book documents, racialised migrants.

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