

ROTTMANN, SUSAN BETH. *In pursuit of belonging: forging an ethical life in European-Turkish spaces*. xii, 203 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2019. £99.00 (cloth)

*In pursuit of belonging* puts one woman's life at the centre of its narrative in order to tell a broader story about German-Turkish migrants' struggle to find belonging when they decide to return to Turkey. Throughout the book's five ethnographic chapters, readers get intimately acquainted with Leyla, a working-class mother of five, and how she has struggled to build a 'good life' for herself and her family after having returned to Turkey following a childhood spent in Germany. Supplemented by material gathered through fieldwork with other German-Turkish return migrants, Leyla's story functions as the narrative backbone for the book's key argument: that experiences of transnational mobility open up migrants' ethical horizons and expand their ethical choices. Turkish migrants who have grown up and spent a considerable amount of their lives in Germany, Rottmann argues, find themselves equipped with a wider range of ideas about what a good and respectable life might look like than those who have not had those experiences. This approach towards migration as a social experience with ethical consequences is a refreshing and productive one. It brings into view international mobility as not just physical movement but also a catalyst of ethical plurality and change.

However, the focus on migratory experiences as drivers for ethical reflection at times risks painting an image of two rather static societies – Germany and Turkey – with change in the latter primarily the result of migrants' exposure to more progressive lifestyles in the former. Social forces inside Turkey that have consistently challenged the status quo and the moral regime underpinning it (such as Kurdish, Alevi, feminist, and LGBTQI movements) are unfortunately absent from Rottmann's account. As a result, the moral conservatism prevalent in the Istanbul working-class neighbourhoods where Rottmann did her research easily appears as if it was a cultural fact rather than the outcome of a complex political history and governmental present.

The book's introduction outlines the author's approach to migration as an ethical project and describes the complex position German-Turkish return migrants occupy within the transnational space that unfolds between the two countries. While European modernity remains a powerful object of aspiration for many in Turkey, German-Turks can face considerable stigma for having allegedly abandoned Turkish ways of life when they return. Chapter 1 introduces readers to a fascinating world of illegal call centres in Istanbul where return migrants like Leyla often find work thanks to their language skills. Rottmann depicts the ethical dilemmas that work in such centres poses for return migrants with little economic and cultural capital. Women like Leyla have to balance a need for income and a desire for the independence that employment promises with gendered expectations of modesty and the morally questionable practice of scamming customers in the call centres. Transnational experiences help them navigating this complex world. Chapter 2 focuses on how Leyla aspires to being a good mother to her children, including her disabled daughter. Women like her are often stigmatized in Turkey as neglectful mothers both because of their employment and because of their migration background. Rottmann shows how Leyla draws on her exposure to norms regarding gender and education in Germany to counter such stigma and raise her children responsibly. Chapter 3 turns to Leyla's relationship with her husband, a long-distance truck driver. We learn how Leyla mobilizes ideas about womanhood and romance she is familiar with from Germany to shape a companionate marriage that differs from the dominant partnership models around her. In chapter 4, Rottmann narrates how Leyla has sought to forge meaningful relationships with other households in her working-class neighbourhood. An educational ethos acquired while abroad, Rottmann argues, is a key avenue for return migrants to combat negative stereotypes and to carve out a respected place in the community for themselves. Chapter 5 considers Leyla's engagement with religion, showing how her experience in Germany has equipped her with greater readiness to question

received dogmas. The conclusion sums up the book's key arguments, while an appendix contains Leyla's own memoirs (translated into English) and a question sheet for teaching purposes, which usefully encourages reflection on the differences between the ethnography and Leyla's autobiography.

*In pursuit of belonging* provides detailed ethnographic insight into the complex ethical negotiations that shape the everyday lives of German-Turkish return migrants. While the lack of deeper analysis when it comes to accounting for the prevailing moral and political conservatism of Turkey's working classes constitutes a drawback, with its focus on migration as an ethical experience, the book makes an important contribution to studies of transnational mobility, return migration, and migrant lives.

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