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Megan A. Carney. Island of Hope: Migration and Solidarity in the Mediterranean

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Megan A. Carney. *Island of Hope: Migration and Solidarity in the Mediterranean.* **Oakland: University of California Press, 2021. Pp. 240. ISBN 9780520344518.**

This very recent publication engages with contemporary events in Italy, particularly in Sicily, and the island of Lampedusa, regarding the wave of migration across the Mediterranean from the southern to the northern shores in the last number of years. Notably, it opens with a map of the migration routes, not only to Italy but across the western and eastern Mediterranean, contextualizing the Italian experience in an often-neglected broader migration pattern that has long included crossings of Sub-Saharan Africans from Morocco to Spain, and from Algeria to France, and now includes migration via Turkey to Eastern Europe (Bulgaria and Romania), and via Greece to southern and northern Italy, as well as Calais, France, as a collection point from which to cross to the U.K. Nonetheless, the main focus is on trans-Mediterranean migration to the southernmost points of Italy, particularly Sicily, which Carney describes as "both Italy and not Italy" (8–9), and on solidarity with the migrants in the face of official and unofficial opposition. Divided into six chapters, the book returns to Sicily's past as a site of much earlier migrations, examines the present, and closes with the future for these migrants now in Italy: 1) "Austerity and Migration as Mediterranean 'Questions'"; 2) "'There Is a Lot of Creativity on This Island'"; 3) "The Reception Apparatus"; 4) "Migrant Solidarity Work"; 5) "Edible Solidarities"; and 6) "Caring for the Future: The Case of Migrant Youth."

Methodologically, as outlined in the "Introduction," Carney's study benefits from strong social science data collection through field work, and assessment against historical knowledge and statistical analysis in comparison with prior studies conceptualizing the study of migrant solidarity as anthropological. Her approach is to challenge the neoliberal global economy that produces the need for migration and colours the reception of migrants. She states that her work has been particularly informed by scholars writing in the feminist anthropological tradition, and the theorization and advances made by Black and Indigenous scholars who argue for an abolitionist, decolonizing, and radical orientation to ethnographic field research, and to the critique of racialized capitalism, against white supremacy. This method and approach are reflected in all the chapters, especially most directly in those focusing on current migration, the migrants, the

institutions established to deal with them, the activism in their favour, and the particular needs and circumstances of migrant youth.

Two chapters stand out from these others for different reasons. Each respects the main methodology and approach of the whole study, while incorporating elements to enhance understanding of the broader context. One includes a history of Sicily, as a reminder in this context of its migratory history and resilience, "'There Is a Lot of Creativity on This Island.'" This history begins from the ancient through the more recent conquests of Sicily as a perpetually defeated island. As part of a Mediterranean borderland, Sicily and *siciliani* have been shaped not only by violent invasions but also by a continual ebb and flow of migrants, and internal conflicts.

The place of Sicily within Italy—simultaneously impoverished, backward, a burden, and the sense of Sicilians being responsible for and guilty of their own misery—determines the attitudes of others toward Sicily, and of Sicilians toward themselves. Against this backdrop, Sicilians, whether pro- or anti-immigration, are on the geographical forefront of the current flow of migrants toward Italy and Europe. The other distinctive chapter is that on solidarity through food culture, "Edible Solidarities," which steps out from more formal migrant institutions into specific restaurants, "Moltivolti" in Palermo's Ballarò neighbourhood (2014), and "Ginger" in Agrigento (opened 2016), which provide models of shared ownership, employment, and valorization of African, Maghrebi, and Sicilian cuisines in fusion. These enterprises serve as a model of integration for others, of their embedding in "solidarity economies" that rise above the perceived ethos and logic of austerity and indebtedness of migrants (and Sicilians), and as instances of a broader web of such businesses.

Carney herself identifies challenges to completing this research, which she characterizes as issues of access impacting all researchers, particularly of access reflecting gender and ethnicity, and in relation to her specific topic, rather than personal limitations, or limitations of the study. Specifically, she challenges why she was unable to access certain sites for her field work, "for one reason or another but that almost always related to my positionality as a white American scholar and mother of very young children (one of whom I carried in utero during a research trip in 2017)" (17). Carney locates these refusals of access in ethical and methodological decisions based on politics. Specifically, she cautions that "the gendering, class, and racialization of social spaces makes certain types of research agendas possible only for the privileged few" poses a threat to the discipline of anthropology as

a whole (17). In tackling research "limitations" in this way, Carney raises broader questions about academic research practices, enhancing further her highly accomplished and relevant work.

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