



Convivencia: urban space and migration in a small Catalan town

by Martin Lundsteen, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2022, xiv + 199 pp., \$120.00 (£92.00) (Hardback). ISBN: 978-1-78661-452-0

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To cite this article: Mikel Aramburu (2024) Convivencia: urban space and migration in a small Catalan town, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 47:3, 587-589, DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2022.2160778](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2160778)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2160778>



Published online: 22 Dec 2022.



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Despite these problematic aspects, *Racism and Gay Men of Color* is a “complete” book, in the sense that it draws on the author’s own experiences, it is based on a thorough theoretical framework, provides rich empirical data and advocates for social justice. Sulaimon Giwa goes beyond the dominance of the HIV/AIDS debate in relation to gay men of colour, providing an important contribution to the literature on coping strategies against racism and discrimination, including its online versions. This book will be of interest to scholars, students and practitioners from different areas who work on the intersection between race and sexual orientation. *Racism and Gay Men of Color* will also be of interest to a broader audience and should be read particularly by White gay men in order to start questioning some of their privileges within the GLTB community.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2159478>



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Since the end of the Franco regime, state regulation has made home ownership one of the main strategies of social reproduction of the Spanish working class. In the 1960s and 70s, new subsidized private housing projects were built on the outskirts of cities to accommodate migrants coming from the Spanish rural exodus. It was in these neighbourhoods, with poor facilities and far-reaching class stigmas, where migrants from the global South began to settle around the year 2000. Much like their internal migrant predecessors, the new international immigrants were also funnelled into home ownership. Due to their (over)indebtedness, these newcomers bought from native working-class homeowners who were thus able to move to other neighbourhoods with better housing and facilities. In many working-class areas, the population change happened very fast. When the financial crisis of 2008 hit, these neighbourhoods were left with an aging and impoverished contingent of native neighbours, who could not leave and now felt trapped, and the newcomers from a racialized working class who, in the middle of a severe economic crisis, could not afford to pay their mortgages. The resulting environment was conducive to conflicts of *convivencia* (conviviality), such as those studied ethnographically by Martin Lundsteen.

Although there are several noteworthy studies on the effects of over-indebtedness on the living conditions of migrants as well as on the mobilizations against evictions, fewer have focused on community dynamics. Lundsteen’s

ethnography is set in Salt, a small Catalan town on the periphery of Girona, a type of urban community that has been less researched regarding migratory issues than big cities. Lundsteen shows how in the Barri Centre of Salt, the “native flight” was largely promoted in a sort of pyramid scheme by the local real estate agencies, urging the neighbours to sell before the place became a ghetto and the flats lost value. However, most local interpretations stress that the reason why the former inhabitants moved out was a cultural clash between old and new residents.

Indeed, the main thesis of the book is that social conflicts such as those in Salt, which captured the attention of regional and national media, rather than being the result of cultural diversity, are the product of a growing precariousness. However, as Lundsteen shows time and again through different ethnographic situations, social inequality is rendered largely invisible for the benefit of cultural explanations regarding conflicts in the use of private, public, and semi-public spaces. It is here that the term *convivencia*, ubiquitous to refer to migration-related conflicts, plays an important role. *Convivencia* has a complex meaning in Spanish contemporary political culture, since Americo Castro introduced it in the debates about the historical foundations of the Spanish national “character”. In contemporary usages, it is generally employed to refer to conflictual contexts (when *convivencia* is lacking or at risk), where a difficult coexistence between groups implicitly understood as mutually incompatible or doomed to conflict is at play. The *convivencia* frame conveys notions of strong (usually ethnic) boundaries between social groups whose differences are seen as intrinsically conflict-prone.

Lundsteen’s ethnography provides a thick description of boundary-work in Salt, showing how (ethnic) boundaries are more or less salient in different contexts of daily life. While the hegemonic opposition between “us” and “them” (*autóctonos e inmigrantes*, natives and migrants) is the most politically relevant and present in most social fields, other boundaries emerge as well within these categories, such as those between Catalan natives and Spanish migrant “natives” or within foreign immigrants themselves according to skin colour or geographical origin. Likewise, the people belonging to these different groups (invested with different cultural capitals) use different terms to refer to each other. However, although the boundaries and the resulting groupings can be fragmented, no social category or group seems to emerge cutting across these boundaries. In the last pages of the book, some new social movements appear to do so, but not much is revealed about the people behind these political actors.

The different groups emerging from boundary working are not equals; some have more power than others in fixing the “common” norms of coexistence in the urban space. Together with *convivencia*, the other successful term regarding migration in the city has been that of *civismo* (civility). The concern with civility has led to a set of urban policy measures seeking to reduce the use of public space for actors deemed to be a menace for the norms of coexistence, such as closing public water sources or the prohibition of satellite TV dishes on the facades of buildings, as well as police measures adopted to deal with the perceived insecurity, such as harassment of racialized young people in the squares or patrolling inside private buildings. Lundsteen aptly refers to these measures as “policies

of quieting". They are intended to control an increasingly destitute subjects who are not recognized as full citizens, and at the same time to convey to the "good citizens" (specially but not only native) a sense that something is being done to alleviate their growing uncertainties and anxieties. But the public staging of these policies of quieting lead to the criminalization and further marginalization of outsiders and precarious individuals, thus widening the gap between us and them.

Finally, I would like to highlight one of the most noteworthy aspects of Lundsteen's analysis: that of jumping scales. For example, conflicts in Salt jumped to the regional and national media, which used them to illustrate migration-related problems of *convivencia*. But, at the same time, people in Salt, particularly those living in middle-class neighbourhoods, used those images spread by the media to forge their own representations of local conflicts, further reinforcing the boundary between us and them. Meanwhile, those same images are also used strategically by local actors, such as the city council or some NGOs, to negotiate with regional and national governments to get more resources for the municipality. In conclusion, *Convivencia* by Martin Lundsteen is a fine-grained and multi-scalar ethnography of contemporary ideologies regarding ethnic and racial urban conflicts.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2160778>



Colonial racial capitalism, edited by Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2022, 352 pages, \$28.95 (paperback), ISBN: 9781478018742

The authors featured in the edited collection *Colonial Racial Capitalism* attempt to demonstrate the necessity of understanding the expropriation and exploitation of land and colonized populations in any discussion of racial capitalism. As editors Susan Koshy et al. point out in their introduction, while Cedric Robinson popularized the term, the original conceptualization of racial capitalism itself came from the settler colonial context of South Africa. They argue that these early South African theorists understood that capitalism was not only about racialized labour, but also about land—who may claim it, how we relate to it, and how it sustains and nourishes life. Building upon Cedric Robinson's seminal text, *Black Marxism*, the articles included in this collection argue that just as capitalism has always been and continues to be predicated on constructed racial difference, so too has capitalist accumulation required a colonial relationship that radically transforms peoples' relationship to the land and reimagines land itself as an object that may be bought, sold, valued, and discarded.