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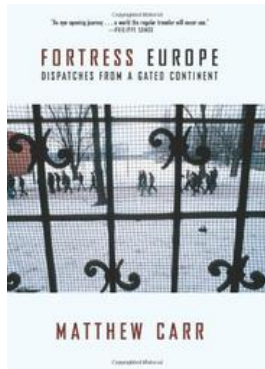
Fortress Europe

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Since the implementation of Schengen's provisions in 1995, the elimination of internal border controls has been one of the European Union's (EU's) greatest accomplishments. However, increased mobility within the EU has come at a price. While ensuring the free movement of its citizens, the EU has tightened its control over who is permitted to enter, most notably by increasing external border controls over the past two decades. In his latest work, *Fortress Europe: Dispatches from a Gated Continent*, journalist Matthew Carr investigates the human impact of "the most sustained and extensive border enforcement program in history." Carr analyzes Europe's increasingly hard borders, both physical and bureaucratic, and the glaring discrepancy between the EU's stated commitment to human rights and its repressive, punitive, and sometimes-violent response to irregular migration. While the EU promotes the mobility of goods in a global market through multilateral partnerships and free trade areas, it simultaneously restricts the entrance of people from the global

South. In this text he successfully articulates the paradox between globalization and today's global emphasis on borders, security, and exclusion.

Carr first briefly delineates the history of borders, their modern and multiple definitions, and traces the political origins of the Schengen zone. Since the advent of the Westphalian system and the emergence of the 'nation-state', borders have been perceived as fixed entities; lines are now seen as a natural way of ordering the world. The relatively recent implementation of 'paper walls', marked by the necessity of passports, visas, and travel documents, often goes unrecognized in public and political discourse. These mechanisms of controlling who may enter and stay in a given territory have become essential to contemporary border enforcement. By bringing this indispensable historical and global perspective to the text, he deconstructs the concept of borders, underlining its continually shifting and dynamic nature.

The book follows with an analysis of the political and economic forces behind contemporary re-bordering processes, particularly the perceived threat of invasion from the global South. Carr rightly asserts that the threat articulated in public and political discourse – for example, in reaction to the Arab Spring – is without statistical justification; however, the martial and maritime rhetoric of an invasion justifies the enclosement and fortification of the EU by nurturing fears, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe. This analysis is complemented by extensive primary research chronicling current EU border policing and enforcement strategies. In the past two decades, Carr asserts that with each EU enlargement and the concomitant softening of internal barriers, the EU placed additional pressure on peripheral nations to tighten their borders, and to effectively close any 'back doors' to Europe. The advanced level of technology, the internationally trained border guards and the general scale of surveillance protecting the outer boundaries of Europe – not from a military threat but from irregular migration – is striking. Carr's investigation leads him to Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Italy, Malta, Greece, and the United Kingdom, as well as neighboring countries. Local, national, and EU cooperation with non-EU countries, such as Morocco, Libya, Ukraine, and Turkey, plays an integral part in the repression of Europe's unwanted migrants through the ongoing externalization of migration control in what Carr deems to be the outsourcing of the EU's "dirty work."

Fortress Europe is most effective as an exposé calling attention to the human consequences of hard borders. Tragedy is perhaps the most salient theme of the text. The narratives collected shed light on the brutality occurring at Europe's outer edges, both by land and by sea. Carr paints a vivid picture of the precarious circumstances facing asylum seekers, including their sometimes fatal attempts to cross, the harsh and

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arbitrary conditions of detention centers, and their arduous legal battles to remain in Europe. However, alongside suffering Carr highlights the more inspiring and human aspects of his research in the second half of the text. He contrasts strict border enforcement, callous treatment and the uncertain futures of irregular migrants with stories of migrants' "tenacity, resilience, and desire," tales of solidarity among ordinary Europeans, non-governmental organizations and migrants, and descriptions of borderlands where daily interactions and identities challenge the practicality and logic behind contemporary migration control. In asserting the multi-form and sometimes fluid identities of those who cross borders, Carr take borderlands as laboratories for an alternative future: a syncretic, less-exclusive EU more in line with its diversity motto.

Despite the second half's more positive notes, *Fortress Europe* favors the more violent, emotional, and tragic accounts of clandestine border crossings. Although this approach draws much-needed attention to the questionable treatment of asylum seekers and human rights violations at European borders, it obscures the tenuous positions of irregular migrants who enter Europe legally but overstay their visas. Similarly, his focus on migrants, although empirically rich and effective, calls for equally rich and detailed accounts of the practices of border agents to illuminate the complexity of interactions among local actors. In particular, it emphasizes the need for ethnographic case studies of borderlands where the movement of people and goods are intertwined and embedded.

Fortress Europe gives depth to European border issues by combining historical and political analysis with multi-sited empirical research, and most importantly by raising the voices of irregular migrants. Although not an academic or theoretical study of borders, Carr's reporting speaks to border studies' attempts to capture the material and immaterial nature of borders, the extension of their filtering capacity through space, and the intricacy of borderlands. Its powerful descriptions allow the reader to catch a glimpse of several EU and Schengen checkpoints and detention centers, and see their various histories and particularities, as well as their commonalities.

Carr's message is clear: "If borders can be hardened, they can also be softened." He argues that the EU must begin dismantling the 'walls' built on fear and prejudice if it wants to stay true to the values on which it was founded. With its eye-opening depictions, strong moral position and thought-provoking proposals, there is no doubt that this book will appeal to a broad public, nurturing critical discussions about border-related policies and practices and the future of the 'gated continent'.

Reviewed by [Caroline Zickgraf \(http://www.cedem.ulg.ac.be/?page_id=301&lang=en\)](http://www.cedem.ulg.ac.be/?page_id=301&lang=en) and [Laure-Anne Bernes \(http://www.cedem.ulg.ac.be/?page_id=272&lang=en\)](http://www.cedem.ulg.ac.be/?page_id=272&lang=en) of the University of Liege

Fortress Europe: Dispatches from a Gated Continent (http://thenewpress.com/index.php?option=com_title&task=view_title&metaproductid=1840)

By Matthew Carr

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