Undocumented Nationals: Between Statelessness and Citizenship, Wendy Hunter (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 75 pp., paperback $18, eBook $14.

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In *Undocumented Nationals,* Wendy Hunter sets out to call attention to the "grey zone" or "in-between status" of people who "cannot exercise full citizenship owing to evidentiary deficiencies" (p. 6). Drawing on a range of examples from different countries, Hunter considers the general causes and consequences of being undocumented, as well as the more specific situation of those whom she refers to as "undocumented nationals." The book also identifies key lessons that will be of real-world interest to those seeking to reduce the scale of undocumented nationality. Through in-depth consideration of two particular cases—the Dominican Republic and Kenya—*Undocumented Nationals* evaluates the prospects of ongoing international campaigns relating to statelessness and birth registration, and clearly and persuasively demonstrates the importance of political will on the part of states. Before examining her chosen case studies, Hunter explains in detail the specific human situation in which she is interested. She does this by first identifying a broader group of people who lack documents and then differentiating between "people who lack official papers because they lack legal entitlement . . . and people who in principle have state membership but cannot prove it" (p. 31), providing a diagram to show the clear distinction between these groups. Her primary interest, drawing on her earlier work on birth registration, is in the second group, people who lack documentation due to "administrative denial" of a status held in principle (p. 32). As she tells us, the scale of this problem is unclear given the methodological challenges of counting unrecognized nationals and the low standard for a birth being counted as registered (p. 31). To add to the complexity, the book also provides a valuable reminder that most people alive today were born prior to the existence of digital civil registries (p. 24).

The book proceeds to give a clear and accessible account of the causes of undocumented nationality, which arises primarily out of either state neglect or intentional state discrimination. Certain things emerge as clear risk factors for being undocumented—for example, poverty, being in a minority group, living away from urban centers, or being otherwise marginalized. Cultural factors including language and naming conventions are also highlighted in connection to documentation problems. *Undocumented Nationals* also offers an exceedingly important insight into something that is more often overlooked: a lack of demand on the part of eligible nationals, which often reflects a wariness on the part of minority and indigenous groups in their interactions with the administration of the state. A real strength of the book is its attention to the multifaceted paths that lead people to lives without documents. Hunter's detailed and compelling accounts of the situations of Nubians in Kenya and people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic highlights—for this reader anyway—the complexity and specificity of being undocumented in one's "own" country.

However, while lessons can of course be learned from specific cases, these richly detailed accounts of undocumented nationality sometimes seem at odds with the overarching analytical framework of the book.

In the book, Hunter tends to reproduce a binary distinction between nationality and statelessness, albeit one that recognizes the liminal case of undocumented people who nevertheless—in the terminology from the title of the book—remain *nationals*, but not *stateless*. Interestingly though, the term "evidentiary statelessness," which is used interchangeably with the title of the book, seems to hint at a different interpretation. This phrase seems to displace nationality law as the determinant of status, and to disrupt the boundary between nationality and statelessness that Hunter elsewhere upholds.

This relates to a further observation about the book's claim to originality (admittedly a feature that publishers are often at pains to emphasize). The publisher's abstract sets out the ambitious goal of conceptualizing and examining an "in-between status" in a way existing literature has not (p. 6). This claim strikes me as overstated; recent interdisciplinary work in the area already recognizes the real-world relevance of administrative factors to people's status and rights, and the role of "the state" at all levels in fostering inclusion and exclusion. At an institutional level, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has long been concerned by the situation of those who were once described as "de facto" stateless persons, and may now either be covered by more inclusive determinations of probable statelessness or the risk of statelessness. To say, then, that undocumented nationality has "largely flown under the radar" might well say more about the mode of detection than the wider field. This claim overlooks more recent political work on statelessness and UNHCR's own broadening of the definition.

It may well be that the innovative short format of the publisher's Cambridge Elements series, of which this volume is a part, did not allow for the further reflection and clarification I craved in its presentation of what really is a richly textured grey area. I therefore look forward to Hunter's future work on the topic and her continuing contribution to discussions about the meanings-in-use of "membership," "nationality," and "statelessness." While a specialist audience might find therefore that certain generalizations raise more questions than they answer, the book is a welcome and accessible contribution to the ongoing attempt to illustrate an important in-between status. *Undocumented Nationals* will be a valuable addition to university reading lists around the world in its clear and accessible overview of a problem that has been overlooked or simplified in certain academic disciplines.

—Kelly Staples

Kelly Staples is associate professor of international politics at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom. She is the author of Retheorising Statelessness: A Background Theory of Membership in World Politics (2012) *and a contributor to the edited volume* Understanding Statelessness (2017).

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