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Review

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"In the tradition of the best urban ethnographies, Unwanted provides an insightful look at the lives of second generation Muslim immigrant young men involved in Frankfurt's drug economy. Sandra Bucerius deftly navigates structure, culture, and agency, grappling with how macro-level forces in German society impact the lives of young men she describes as 'perpetual foreigners,' and how their identity work constructs meaning in the face of marginalization and crime involvement. Unwanted illuminates unique features of the German context, while offering larger lessons for scholars who seek to better understand social exclusion and its impacts. It is an important and timely contribution." -Jody Miller, Professor of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University

"Quite simply, this is a superb book. Not only does the author succeed in crafting an ethnographic text that sits alongside the best in urban sociology/anthropology, she has undertaken this from a European perspective, which all too often has played 'second fiddle' to the research produced in the United States. The results of this are striking." -British Journal of Criminology

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"Unwanted contributes a fascinating empirical addition to comparative literature examining the marginalization and institutionalized discrimination experienced by many immigrants. This study provides a longitudinal and personal account of the experiences of Turkish noncitizen drug dealers in Bockenheim. The study addresses important policy implications including changes in citizenship laws, the education system, and policing practices to name just a few. The inclusion of the personal, shared experiences of those struggling with inequality and discrimination presents not only a voice for the disadvantaged but a deeper comprehension of the plights of Muslim immigrants in Germany as well." -Criminal Justice Review

"Bucerius introduces us to the unexplored lives of Turkish drug dealers in Frankfurt, Germany. She takes readers on a fascinating journey, where Turkish drug dealers negotiate drug deals, construct and reproduce gender inequalities, define criminal status hierarchies, and achieve legitimacy in the social world. And this social world is a German one, where Turkish immigrants are told that they are unwanted-that they do not belong. Bucerius illuminates this world through daring fieldwork with a socio-historical grounding that yields novel results which challenge the existing research." -Randol Contreras, Theoretical Criminology

About the Author

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The immigration of Muslims to Europe and the integration of later generations presents many challenges to European societies. Unwanted builds on five years of ethnographic research with a group of fifty-five second-generation Muslim immigrant drug dealers in Frankfurt, Germany to examine the relationship between immigration, social exclusion, and the informal economy. Having spent countless hours with these young men, hanging out in the streets, in cafes or bars and at the local community center, Sandra Bucerius explores the intimate aspects of one of the most discriminated and excluded populations in Germany. Bucerius looks at how the young men negotiate their participation in the drug market while still trying to adhere to their cultural and religious obligations and how they struggle to find a place within German society. The young men considered their involvement in the drug trade a response to their exclusion at the same time that it provides a means of forging an identity and a place within German society. The insights into the lives, hopes, and dreams of these young men, who serve as an example for many Muslim and otherwise marginalized immigrant youth groups in Western countries, provides the context necessary to understand their actions while never obscuring the many contradictory facets of their lives.

- Sales Rank: #2268689 in Books
- Published on: 2014-09-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.30" h x 1.00" w x 9.30" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 272 pages

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An intelligent yet accessible book on immigration and the drug market in Germany

By Katherine

I read Unwanted, along with several other ethnographies, for a university class. This book stood out because of its fascinating content and thoughtful analysis. Additionally, the book is clearly written and not bogged-down with jargon, and I recommend it for both academics and students, and for any persons interested in understanding more about immigration, crime, and/or the drug economy generally.

In Unwanted, Sandra Bucerius documents her experiences studying Muslim immigrant drug dealers in Frankfurt, Germany. While Bucerius sheds light on the structural aspects of German society and law (e.g., challenges to gaining citizenship; education system; etc.) that exclude the men she studied from the formal economy, the author also carefully manages to discuss the men's individual agency and decisions which shape their lives. Her analysis shows the connections between immigration, exclusion, and the drug economy.

The pieces in the book on how Bucerius built rapport and gained the trust of her informants are particularly interesting. Bucerius' tenacity and dedication as a researcher come through, and her experiences can be helpful for new ethnographers and researchers interested in studying populations that are difficult to access. Developing rapport with informants is one of the key challenges for ethnographers, and Bucerius' success at this is apparent as her informants trust her with both their personal and professional (i.e., drug dealing) lives. This allows the author to provide an in-depth account of the local drug economy and the rationale behind the men's decisions (e.g., how they go about finding wholesale dealers; how they determine pricing for their product; why they weren't willing to deal harder drugs, like heroin or cocaine; where they decide to sell drugs and to whom).

Although the study is set in Germany, clear parallels from Unwanted can be drawn to the experiences of marginalized groups in other countries, and this book is informative on how structural barriers can promote criminal activity in all Western nations.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Fantastic book - you'll be happy you got it!

By BookJunkie

Wow! I have nothing but positive things to say about this book. Not only is the subject matter fascinating, the book is extremely well-written. More importantly, though, it explores the lives of a sub-section of Germany's immigrant population, which is often misrepresented and not very well understood within Germany, much less thoughtfully discussed. This book can help improve the dialogue on immigration issues in Germany. Bravo, Professor Bucerius!

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Excellent new ethnogrpahy

By Kevin Haggerty

I zipped through this book in two days. It is an excellent contribution to the revitalization of ethnographic research that we are seeing in Sociology and Criminology. Bucerius secured a remarkable level of research access to a group of street level drug dealers in Germany, and her insights on marginalization, gender, and

identity will linger with the reader for years.

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