Carla Guerrón Montero, *From Temporary Migrants to Permanent Attractions: Tourism, Cultural Heritage, and Afro-Antillean Identities in Panama*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2020. xiv + 224 pp. (Cloth US\$54.95)

On April 22, 1991, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake hit the Caribbean coast near the border between Costa Rica and Panama, destroying buildings, roads, and bridges. In the archipelago of Bocas del Toro, Panama, the damage was especially acute and long-term. The aftershocks of this natural disaster extended well beyond shifting sand and rock and failed infrastructure; it also produced a quintessential moment in disaster capitalism. As the Panamanian government pushed to rebuild the islands via privately-funded tourism development, Bocas del Toro went from being a rather sleepy, self-sufficient archipelago of farmers and fishers to one of Central America's prized tourist destinations.

Anthropologist Carla Guerrón Montero chronicles this transformation from supposed backwater to tropical paradise, documenting the story of Afro-Antilleans—Black West Indians—whose cultural and economic experiences reflected the dramatic shift in national development thinking that made the islands and their people celebrated attractions. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Panamanian State viewed Afro-Antilleans as temporary migrants, unwelcomed guests, and laborers brought by U.S. imperialism and the building of the Panama Canal (1904–14). As Panamanian nationalists struggled to reclaim their sovereignty from the United States, many political leaders blamed Black migrants for the loss of economic, cultural, and political autonomy. The Panamanian government held up an Hispanic and Mestizo heritage, denying its Caribbean and African diasporic ties, and successive politicians worked to limit or ban Afro-Antillean migration. In the 1940s, President Arias Madrid went further, withholding citizenship and property rights to Black and Chinese residents, regardless of their families' generational roots on the isthmus.

Yet by the time tourism began to develop in Bocas del Toro in the mid-1990s, the official Panamanian view of Afro-Antillean belonging had reversed. The nation now prided itself “in being a multiethnic, racially democratic nation” (p. 11). Guerrón Montero describes a number of historical factors that led to this change in racial politics, including the end of military dictatorship, U.S. military withdrawal, decolonization, and the transfer of the Canal from U.S. to Panamanian control. In contrast to many scholars of democratization, development, and nation-building in Latin America, she focuses attention on the transformative role of tourism, arguing that its economic potential created a pathway of negotiation for historically marginalized groups. Afro-Antilleans in Bocas, like Indigenous communities across the isthmus, used the rhetoric of

multiculturalism and international tourism development to advocate for more political and economic rights. Guerrón Montero shows how top-down neoliberal visions and grassroots activism combined around tourism to forge a new narrative of nationhood rooted in Hispanic, Indigenous, and Black traditions.

From Temporary Migrants to Permanent Attractions sheds insight on the intersection of multiculturalism, neoliberal development, and tourism. Guerrón Montero explains, for example, how “commercial nationalism” often surpassed or existed alongside popular nationalism by finding national stories that could be sold on the international tourism market. Folkloric music and cuisine traditionally consumed by domestic audiences, yet historically looked down upon by elites, could be reborn in neoliberal marketing strategies. Although readers will learn little about the tourists themselves in this book, Guerrón Montero expertly weaves together nuanced explanations of important development concepts and detailed descriptions of Afro-Antillean life. Through in-depth participant observation (1996–2014), she is able to reveal the contradictory impacts of tourism development. She shows, for example, that many Bocatoreans, especially women, found new work in the tourist economy and the chance to stay in their home communities, rather than emigrating to the mainland. At the same time, real estate and food prices increased dramatically, foreign capital began to take over the local economy, causing dramatic inflation, and corruption emerged around land deals, creating turf wars on islands once locally and indigenously controlled. Moreover, community members of the Ngäbe-Buglé Indigenous people, who did not have the language skills or cultural capital required by outsiders, found themselves dispossessed or exploited. Meanwhile Afro-Antilleans, whose ancestors emigrated from Anglophone Caribbean islands, were able to convert their knowledge of English and their Caribbean cultural history into economic opportunity. Specific practices of music such as calypso and Afro-Caribbean cuisine, which were beginning to fade within the community, were revitalized as lucrative tourist experiences.

Guerrón Montero's book shows how tourism development brought both opportunities for a racial politics and economy of inclusion within the Panamanian nation, while also exasperating resentments between foreign haves and local have-nots. The experience of Bocatoreans is like that of many circum-Caribbean communities, from the Gullah-Geechee people of the Carolinas and the Creole speakers of the Bahamas to the Rastafarians of Jamaica and other communities that have been swept (sometimes willfully) into the tourism industry as a means to survive and thrive in the neoliberal age of globalization.

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