



LUND UNIVERSITY

Urinbojev, R. (2021). Immigration and Refugee Law in Russia: Socio-Legal Perspectives. By Agnieszka Kubal. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2019. xxii, 205 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £85.00, hard bound. Slavic Review, 80(2), 445-446. doi:10.1017/slr.2021.137

Urinbojev, Rustam

Published in:
Slavic Review

DOI:
[10.1017/slr.2021.137](https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2021.137)

2021

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Urinbojev, R. (2021). Urinbojev, R. (2021). Immigration and Refugee Law in Russia: Socio-Legal Perspectives. By Agnieszka Kubal. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2019. xxii, 205 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £85.00, hard bound. Slavic Review, 80(2), 445-446. doi:10.1017/slr.2021.137. *Slavic Review*, 80(2), 445-446. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2021.137>

Total number of authors:
1

Creative Commons License:
Other

General rights

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

Part 2 considers “Images and Motifs of the Otherworldly,” ultimately suggesting that these intimations of the occult were also part of the potentially misogynistic eroticism in Somov’s oeuvre. The “Conclusion,” subtitled “The Marquises de Sade,” like the Preface, does not address the curious structure of the book. While it refers to a particular, eponymous set of erotic works by Somov, it muses on the potential impact of the grisly circumstances of WWI and the Bolshevik Revolution on Somov and his work. The actual conclusion drawn seems to be that the Revolutionary period signified to Somov that the “masquerade,” both as an erotic motif in his symbolist work and in relation to the expression of his own sexuality, was over, and although he continued with these motifs into the 1930s, they no longer had any meaningful symbolic significance. This is then followed by the illustrations and the Martynov-Somov correspondence, prefaced by a short essay, “The Lady in Blue.”

Overall, despite its peculiar quirks, the book seems like an interesting—albeit patchily structured—informative and well-researched volume. Moreover, for such a cheap book, the illustrations are mostly of surprisingly good quality. But, I have a caveat concerning possible absence of permission from the State Russian Museum to publish the Martynova-Somov correspondence. The source is referenced, but there is no acknowledgement of permission to publish, which one would expect in a properly scholarly publication.

This issue of permission is crucial. Golubev has already been involved in a scandal for illegally publishing Somov’s diaries 1917–23 (2017) and 1923–1925 (2018), which are also copyright controlled by the State Russian Museum. The Museum had first rights to publish them, and he did not ask their permission to publish (see: Natalya Shurenok, “Iskusstvoved suditsa s Russkim muzeem za Somova,” 21/10/19, <http://www.theartnewspaper.ru/posts/7447/> and: <https://artinvestment.ru/news/artnews/20190918>). This incident seems to cast doubt on Golubev’s academic probity, and thus on the potential of this publication to be used as a reliable reference resource for scholarly work. *Caveat emptor*.

PAT SIMPSON

University of Hertfordshire, UK

Immigration and Refugee Law in Russia: Socio-Legal Perspectives. By Agnieszka Kubal. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2019. xxii, 205 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £85.00, hard bound
doi: 10.1017/slr.2021.137

Traditionally seen as a country of emigration, Russia has become one of the main migration hubs worldwide following the collapse of the Soviet Union. These migratory processes were driven largely by the rapidly growing Russian economy and the declining working-age population. Migrant labor represented the primary source available to make up for shortages in the domestic labor force and to meet the needs of Russia’s oil-fueled construction boom. Understandably, in the light of these large-scale migratory flows, post-Soviet Russia has been the subject of a great surge in academic research and writing on migration. The list of topics covered in academic publications on the Russian migration regime is very long: push-and-pull factors of migration; difficult living and working conditions among migrants; immigration laws and practices; racism, xenophobia, and the exclusion of migrants; corruption and migration governance; the health status of migrants; the political economy of housing and migrants’ everyday lives; female migrants’ experiences; migrant illegality and the shadow economy; the social and cultural adaptation of migrants;

migrant religiosity and the role of Islam in migrants' everyday lives; the Eurasian Economic Union and its impact on labor migration; the radicalization of migrants; transnational practices and the livelihoods of migrants; and family migration.

Despite a wide diversity of scholarly explanations for, and approaches to, explaining the Russian migration regime, most studies are of an empirical nature and rarely situate the Russian case within broader migration studies scholarship. Consequently, as Agnieszka Kubal rightly claims in this book, the Russian case is under-represented in theoretical and comparative debates on contemporary migration regimes. Thus, the existing frameworks on immigrants' incorporation into and adaptation to a new environment remains predominantly limited to the North American and west European experiences. By situating Russia's legal immigration regime in comparative perspective with the United States and other major migrant-receiving jurisdictions in Europe, *Immigration and Refugee Law in Russia* will make an important and timely contribution both to migration studies in general, and to comparative migration studies and socio-legal perspectives on the legal incorporation of immigration in particular. A central thrust of the book is the claim that ". . .the evolution of Russian immigration law in 'the everyday work of producing, defining and precluding both movement and connection' follows a well-established logic of more global trends of migration governance" (3) and ". . .modern Russia seems rather to subscribe to a more global trend towards 'irregularization' and deportability, leading to a proliferation of insecure migration statuses" (4). Another valuable contribution of the book is an attempt to advance the existing research on Russian legal culture by challenging the long-established assumptions about Russia's exceptionalism in the legal sphere: lack of the rule of law, corruption, legal nihilism, and an arbitrary justice system. Focusing on the everyday lived experiences of people dealing with immigration and refugee laws, Kubal illustrates that the situation on the ground is much more complex and context-dependent than the dominant explanations portray. This claim is solidly sustained along the different chapters, and it makes the book highly readable, especially from a socio-legal perspective. The book also deserves a special credit for its methodological rigor and inclusion of diverse perspectives, voices, and actors involved in migration processes. Many studies of migration in Russia either focus on (a) migrants' experiences, (b) the expert opinions of migrant rights NGOs, experts, lawyers, and activists, or (c) Russian state officials' views, but very few studies cover and juxtapose these different actors and perspectives. Kubal's study is unique and innovative in this respect as it traces and maps the contrasting views and experiences of migrants, immigration lawyers, asylum seekers, refugees, Russian judges, and immigration officials.

As is the case with many books, *Immigration and Refugee Law in Russia* has some limitations. It mainly covers immigrants' everyday experiences with immigration and refugee laws in formal institutions and arenas (courts, FMS offices, NGOs), where a small percentage of migrants and refugees "end up," while the majority of migrants in Russia organize their daily life "on the street"—outside formal institutions—navigating the repressive legal landscape via various informal and illegal strategies. In other words, the book tells us little about "how the immigration laws work on the street," where a large army of migrants come into contact with immigration officials and police officers on a daily basis. Hence, this book is more useful as an ethnography of "the everyday experiences of immigration laws in formal institutions," rather than of how immigration laws and policies are applied and experienced "on the street" where migrants and the relevant state officials interact on a daily basis.

RUSTAMJON URINBOYEV
Lund University
University of Helsinki