

# **Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South**

*Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South* is a thought-provoking exploration of the intricate relationship between mobility, privilege, and the spaces we occupy. Set in the vibrant yet unequal landscape of Buenos Aires, this work delves into the hidden intersections of desperation and leisure, challenging our understanding of concepts like “non-places” and the stark division between “tourists” and “vagabonds.” With a keen eye, it investigates the unsettling fascination with poverty and how safety-obsessed tourism policies can inadvertently exacerbate the marginalization of those already struggling. Prepare to have your perceptions of mobility, privilege, and the urban experience profoundly reshaped.

– **Babu George, PhD, Professor, Alcorn State University**

# TOURISM SECURITY-SAFETY AND POST CONFLICT DESTINATIONS

**Series editors: Maximiliano E. Korstanje and Hugues Seraphin**

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# **Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South: Marginality and Tourism in Buenos Aires City**

BY

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# Foreword

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The vagabond has been one of the most emblematic figures of urban modernity in European and postcolonial social theory. Zygmunt Bauman's famous essay has certainly amplified the symbolic fields which a vagabond would not be allowed to reside, and yet always entered and/or resided illicitly, like an "intruder" or "pest" that is hard to get rid of. Bauman's work poetically relays what has always been an aspect of the word's semantic ambiguity: from the Latin verb *vagary*, meaning to wander, the Latin-French conflation of *vagabundus* came to be in a border-obsessed modernity synonymous with transgression *qua* criminal intention to dis-order social life. The semantic continuity from transgression to crime bears the mark (and wound) of European modernity's civilizing process *par excellence*: the replacement of anarchic tribalism with the power of the state to nominate fields of life and death. Originating in the officialdoms of the nation-state and its administrative networks, but now also extended to the risk and security projects of independent business, the rejective, if not abjective discourse of vagabondage hides an unsettling constant: not only is the "pest" part of the genetic mechanisms of the "ecosystems" that it allegedly disrupts and threatens (the nation, the ordered city, and an axiologically ridden logic of stratification, with the middle class and the superrich occupying higher honorary positions in it), but it is also, in fact essential for their signifiatory recognition, self-knowledge and systemic survival. Reiterating some familiar posthumanist conclusions regarding the continuity between nature and culture, this symbiosis between filth, displacement, declassification and nonbelonging, and order, cleanliness, and progress, also reveals that the vagabond's genesis may not be modern at all but part and parcel of planetary anthropogenesis long before capitalism and urbanization.

In this book, which advances a perspectival analysis of critical undertones, Maximiliano Korstanje explores some key axiomatic facets of "vagabondage," by ethnographically situating the modern vagabond in the urban landscapes of Buenos Aires. Perspectival discourse is a classificatory tool, so in this book, Bauman's reflections are reinterpreted into a more specific critical program to explore the realities of "contested urbanism," in which zoning, segregation, and policing take precedence over compassion, conviviality, and affirmative action against inequality. The book's thesis aligns with Korstanje's previous research on security and risk as mechanisms of governance and control in the hypermobile

spaces of tourism and consumption. The idea is to geolocate an abstract idea: to rehumanize what we tend to plunge into the dark corners of any phantasmagoria, any City of Lights. Through snapshots of *activities* associated with the “social malaise” of homelessness and poverty, and of *profiles* of marginality embedded in these phantasmatic ecologies of the city, Korstanje attempts to recraft the spatial, temporal, and phenomenological coordinates of what Bauman originally introduced in social theory as an ideal-typical variation of (im)mobility. The latter word game (*im*-mobility) is in fact a language game of analytical depth, which is already implicit in Korstanje’s work: socially fixed and marginalized, but also often politically persecuted, institutionally displaced, and stripped of their citizenship rights, the urban vagabond has become a *sine qua non* “variable” in the formation of a binary analytical model in social analysis. The vagabond’s juxtaposition with tourist and business subjects, privileged urban residents in gated communities, but also even the consumers of cinematic spectacles themed by poverty, sketches a neo-Weberian analogue of what means to be fully and unquestionably recognized as a human subject.

The project proceeds in bold strokes to tell a visually enhanced critical story about our contemporary urban condition – of alienation, mobility, ecological rationalization, and affective (dis)engagement with those human populations law interpellates as “others.” I trust that the readers of this book will enjoy delving into its different chapters and sections, which are dedicated to relevant critical literature reviews, social-theoretical deliberations and ethnographic contextualization of the phenomenon that their author develops in equal stead.