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## Migration studies: new directions?

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S. Ahmed, C. Castaneda, A. Fortier and M. Sheller, eds, *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003. xiv + 304 pp. ISBN 1-85973-629-7.

S. Castles and M.J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 3rd edn, revised and updated. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. xiii + 338 pp. ISBN 0-333-94879-3.

B. Jordan and F. Düvell, *Migration: The Boundaries of Equality and Justice*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003. viii + 191 pp. ISBN 0-7456-3008-1.

In the post-Communist, post-9/11 world, migration and immigration have become an important area of public interest. Since the attack on the World Trade Center and ensuing crises such as the Madrid and London bombings, immigration fears have fused with those over national security. Ageing populations, strained welfare state arrangements and the reawakening of suppressed regional conflicts have sustained this interest. The collapse of the Soviet Union and wars in Bosnia and Kosovo led to a new wave of economic migrants, guest-workers and asylum seekers in Europe. Migrants from the post-Soviet bloc countries, including Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic among others, who acceded to the European Union (EU) in 2004, continue to face internal restrictions by a number of pre-enlargement EU members. New ethnic conflicts, creating refugee crises, have concentrated attention on asylum seekers. The murders in the Netherlands of politician Pim Fortuyn and film-maker Theo van Gogh have stirred up popular fears, reinforced by media coverage, that immigration might damage the liberal democracies that tend to attract it – by undermining the social solidarity that permits present citizenship and welfare arrangements (a fear exploited by Fortuyn), or by curtailing free speech (a fear exploited when van Gogh was killed after screening a documentary

viewed as critical of Islam). National governments in the 1990s reacted with a range of measures to curb the numbers of refugees coming into their countries.

In Western Europe, politicians vie to find a 'solution' that satisfies competing economic and political demands. Immigration ranked alongside the economy, crime and healthcare as an issue at the 2005 UK general election, with all three main parties proposing specific control policies. In the public domain there is now a consensus that migration needs to be managed and controlled – that unchecked immigration would undermine ethnic harmony and internal social cohesion in host countries. There are echoes of this debate in many parts of the developing world, where unequal rates of progress have caused high rates of regional economic migration (for example from Central and South Asia into the Middle East, sub-Saharan into North and Southern Africa and Central into North America), and where recent conflict has caused unprecedented refugee flows (notably after war and economic collapse in Afghanistan, Rwanda, the Congo and Sudan).

This public interest has been paralleled in the social sciences, demonstrated in new titles and the agendas of research funding bodies. Social scientists have been concerned with the nature of new migrant flows, the implications of these for citizenship and national identity, the rise of ethnic politics and multiculturalism, the role of governance and security policies. Social policy research has explored the tensions between economic pressure for enhanced immigration – especially of younger and more educated workers to offset a shrinking labour force – and the social strains commonly thought to be created by that migration. More recently, an interest in social capital is developing, which could potentially bridge the gap between macro- and micro-level processes.

The intellectual preoccupation with globalism has been an important framework for this work. Theorists have argued that social scientists should abandon their traditional analytical focus on the nation-state in favour of one centred on global flows and networks. One aspect of this new orientation is the emphasis on the new global world as one that offers unprecedented opportunities for mobility, migration and travel. National governments may have imagined that the free circulation of goods, services and capital across borders would reduce people's inclination to migrate by allowing them to prosper from wherever they were. However, in reality, the movement of commodities appears to promote rather than stem the movement of people, with telecommunications raising rather than reducing the desire to meet and talk in person.

These three volumes do not restrict themselves only to European empirical confines, offering instead more widely applicable conclusions on an increasingly global problem. Until recently, the study of migration has been dominated by analyses of migration from the poor into the rich world. The

books reviewed here illustrate the rapid expansion and integration of migration studies. Under the impact of contemporary trends, attention is now on the developing world as much as the developed world. Reflecting this, these volumes concentrate not just on the US, Germany, France and the UK, but also on North Africa, Turkey, the Asia Pacific, Palestinians, the Irish and indigenous Australians. Moreover, instead of concentrating on economic migration, the focus has broadened to encompass new or neglected types of migrant, including asylum seekers, guest-workers, illegal migrants and new types of professional migrants. However, they are less successful, to differing degrees, at presenting fresh solutions to the divide between global pressures towards increased migration and the socio-political aspects of individual motives and experiences.

## **GLOBALIZATION AND MIGRATION: THE MACRO LEVEL**

At the macro level, then, globalization sets the parameters of these three studies on migration, though in different ways. For Castles and Miller, globalization has undermined the Westphalian nation-state system, and associated patterns of migration are a further source of instability. Global economic integration has weakened national cultures and identity and global markets have started calling the shots for national governments, ending the traditional ‘nexus between power and national boundaries’ (p. 39). Globalization has generated qualitatively different patterns of migration, both in terms of geographical reach and character, being more internationally encompassing and having greater social, economic and political significance (pp. 278–80). Social networks and transnational links and practices, an inherent feature of global trends, have meant that ‘micro-structures’ (forms of social capital) created to support migrants in vulnerable circumstances have become more important than ever.

Economic migration inevitably intensifies when ‘newly industrializing’ nations stop being dependent on the early industrializers and gain the technologies and skills that enable them to compete on a more equal footing. Although educated Indians and Latin Americans can earn more than their peers by working locally as software programmers, call centre handlers or car assemblers, their pay is multiplied many more times if they can migrate to do these jobs in old urban centres at first-world wage rates. While economic globalization may have held out the promise of narrowing global inequality, the more usual reality has been continuing discrepancies in pay and conditions, increasing incentives to move. Richer nations are then forced to restrict economic immigration to maintain their supply of imports made cheap by ‘offshoring’ to lower-wage labour abroad.

*In Migration: The Boundaries of Equality and Justice*, Jordan and Düvell

similarly argue that the newly integrated world economy has created unfamiliar forms of migration. New kinds of economic activity, driven by finance capital that prospers by transcending national borders, have triggered social changes. The new global financial markets depend on mobile labour – recruitment, production and distribution are no longer nationally constrained (p. 9). These changes have produced new forms of migration, raising issues for its management and implications for governance and political liberalism. After summarizing the large literature on ‘corporate-driven’ globalization, the authors maintain that the challenge of contemporary migration is to find ways of dealing with it that are compatible with global equality, justice and liberal democracy.

In *Uprootings/Regroundings*, Ahmed et al. adopt a more ambivalent relationship to current thinking on globalization. Although this volume tackles macro-politics by addressing transnationalism and global capitalism, it presents itself as a counterpoint to global discourses and universalizing theories. It sets out a more rooted account of the impact of global capitalism and transnationalism – one that is grounded in feminist and post-colonial theories of difference. Global frameworks are replaced with an emphasis on the particular. The book contests the current trend to see mobility as destabilizing identities (captured, for example, in notions such as ‘liquidity’ and ‘rootlessness’). While transnationalism has changed experiences of belonging, it has not necessarily created rootless identities. Moreover, migration is not just about movement but also about ‘staying put’ – for example the book looks at the sense of belonging on the part of indigenous communities dispossessed by the migration of others (e.g. indigenous Australians). The four editors and their 10 contributors use the concept of regrounding to show that migration does not simply undermine identities but also creates the (re-)establishment of identity through, for example, the economics and politics of establishing new homes.

Despite these differences, all of the books reviewed depart from the ‘borderless world’ view on globalism by insisting on the continuing importance of boundaries and borders, and the nation-state they help define. In Castles and Miller’s *The Age of Migration*, the state retains a key role in managing migration and selecting the type and numbers of migrants to accept; states remain at the forefront of attempts to deal with the dilemmas arising from the need to accommodate new minorities and simultaneously to protect them from exploitation. While individual agency creates a degree of unpredictability, governmental measures and policy continue to determine who can enter the country, who is allowed to stay, what activities they take up, what social reception they are given, and what civic and economic rights they can acquire. For example, the adoption of assimilationist policies (France) or multicultural ones (Canada, Australia, Sweden) can substantially affect early immigrants’ experience, and influence the expectations and choices of later prospective migrants in different ways. State action

may, moreover, have counterproductive effects. While the chapter on the state and international migration looks mainly at the stimulus and intended effects of new immigration and asylum policies, the chapter on new ethnic minorities usefully reviews their various unintended consequences: housing subsidies causing ethnic separation of neighbourhoods and school catchment areas in Sweden and France, special linguistic and educational rights inhibiting social and labour market integration in Germany, but a *laissez-faire* policy producing similar segregation and deprivation in many US cities.

Contrary to what some economists are now saying, Castles and Miller argue that migration is not a solution to the North/South divide or to western demographic problems. By implication, governments will inevitably – and, in their view, with some justice – seek to regulate migration even where shrinking populations and labour forces give them some economic incentive for it. Thus, in relation to migration as a solution to the demographic problems shaping up in the West as a result of ageing populations, the authors argue that the levels of immigration required to solve this problem would be politically unsustainable. Even at times of relatively strong growth, the labour market situation remains generally adverse for immigrants (even when highly skilled). The authors therefore highlight the contradiction between opening borders for the movement of information, commodities and capital and closing borders to people. Controls on migration seem to contradict underlying economic and cultural impulses towards more exchange (pp. 282–4), but they satisfy vested political interests. It is easier to attack the inflow of people than goods and services.

Thus, for Castles and Miller, the solution to the gap between the rich North and the poor South is not large-scale migration. Rather, it is argued that this disparity can be better dealt with by sustainable economic progress in developing countries. While some restrictions (for example on political, employment or residential rights) are, in their view, incompatible with market principles and democratic norms (pp. 280–4), unauthorized migrants are notably vulnerable. Rejecting calls for open migration, they argue instead that immigration controls ensure harmonious relations between migrants and indigenous populations. Regional integration initiatives such as the EU and NAFTA may in part attempt to defuse immigration by improving trade access for poorer countries bordering rich ones, but they also enable stronger, supranationally coordinated responses against these migration flows that are not deterred (pp. 95–114).

In discussing how a liberal democratic response to migration can be forged, Jordan and Düvell insist on the need for an ethical theory to acknowledge the role of boundaries. Coming from a political economy perspective, these authors present justice as being about equal distribution of rights, duties and resources and, when applied to migration, questions of justice cannot be addressed through a model of a borderless world.

However, the problem with existing theories of social justice, they maintain, is that they are influenced by the idea of a social contract (Hobbes, Locke and more recently Rawls), which is based on an abstract idea of boundary-less society. Such a level of abstraction makes it impossible to grasp 'real' issues of mobility and membership. They suggest that existing solutions to the management of migration (characterized as nationalist, globalist, federalist and ethical) are limited: the first calls for stronger national sovereignty and tighter border controls; the second calls for more effective international governance; the third for new, global systems of membership; and the fourth for new solutions to help vulnerable communities. More innovative distributional rules are proposed by the authors, though it is not clear how they could be operationalized. The authors conclude that citizenship needs to be redrawn and the state and international organizations need to cooperate to protect the right to move any vulnerable people.

In their discussion of globalization and transnationalism, Ahmed et al. explicitly set out to oppose theories that underplay the role of the state or borders in constraining or facilitating choice. Their perspective on transnationalism departs from typical approaches in two ways. First, they question the way it hinges on a distinction between disconnected locations, arguing instead that locations are flexible and boundaries between them blurred (encapsulated in the idea of 'borderzones'). Second, they challenge reliance on the concept of cosmopolitanism (defined as a sensitivity to local cultures through more cross-border activities with an openness to globalization) for promoting a utopian perspective on global migration, which is based on the idea of a levelling out of inequality as populations become more mobile. Thus, they claim that their overall project is 'to call into question the romanticization of mobility as travel, transcendence and transformation' (p. 1). Cosmopolitanism fails to acknowledge the salience of nationally structured power relations, illustrated in the way, for example, the transnational Chinese continue to operate according to national principles. Moreover, although the book deals with globalization, it is ultimately most concerned with timeless themes such as the trauma of migration, which may be expressed physically.

Although contributors to *Uprootings/Regroundings* go on to examine migrant activities and experiences at the micro level, power remains central to their analysis. Ahmed et al. insist that it is not possible to understand migration, or staying put, without an awareness of power relations, which might inhibit or facilitate choices. Power is exerted both by formal institutions (e.g. border police, immigration and employment laws) and by informal attitudes (e.g. racial prejudice and attitudes in the workplace). Migration is a symptom of the 'spatialization' of power relations, which may be growing: it may, for example, be deliberately inflicted when villagers are moved out to make way for dam reservoirs or bomb tests, or accidentally inflicted when nearby industrialization poisons traditional fishing and

farming grounds. The notion of unconstrained mobility is, they claim, a myth. It continues to be structured by power relations – ‘unlimited mobility’ is the ‘preserve of the privileged white propertied nationals’ (p. 243).

Thus, it is suggested that the European notion of a borderless space is in fact an invention – the very idea of European identity depends on borders and illegal immigration. Indeed, boundaries are reinforced through the growing industry of illegal migration. Prostitute trafficking from Eastern Europe is not so much about the coercive practices of East European countries as it is about the construction of the EU’s borders. It is concluded that ‘in current European developments, internal and external frontiers, the local and the global, are co-constitutive and . . . nation-states play a crucial role in this. Rather than declaring the nation state extinct in an age of globalisation . . . it is probably more correct to state that European . . . states are differentially embedded in complex cross-border networks of transnational capital, digital technology, (illegal) migration, and policy making’ (p. 243). The emphasis on power is applied also to the new migration industry – uncovered, for example, in the corporate interests behind new surveillance technologies and the money-making potential of the border control ‘industry’.

## **NEW RESEARCH AGENDAS: LINKING MACRO AND MICRO**

Castles and Miller’s and Jordan and Düvell’s analyses are pitched largely at the macro level. However, they raise new areas of research thrown up by contemporary forms of migration that are particularly amenable to micro-level analysis. For example, Castles and Miller (pp. 114–17) probe the growth of a new migration industry of labour recruiters, brokers, interpreters, housing agents, lawyers as well as human smugglers involved in transporting migrants illegally and banks that deal with financial remittances, which they see as a feature of the social and transnational linkages that are intrinsic to migration. Motivated by the ‘push’ of war, poverty and persecution and the ‘pull’ of lucrative low wage labour and sex trades, human smuggling and trafficking are one of the newest and most disturbing forms of migration in the new global era, now demanding more micro-level research.

Drawing on their own research in London, Berlin and other European cities, Jordan and Düvell warn that strict attempts by high wage countries to regulate entry will merely result in more ‘irregular’ migration, promoted as much by employers wanting cheaper and more flexible labour as by itinerant employees. Arguing that liberal democracies have always restricted access to the full fruits of citizenship, they explore the alternative approach of combining unrestricted ‘cosmopolitan economic membership’



for migrants to be rendered compatible with differentiated forms of political rights and citizenship. While implying that this might avoid the charge of 'left wing xenophobia' levelled at those who would attach full citizenship rights to residency but therefore have to restrict this, the authors (p. 96) admit that liberal theory's history of assigning degrees of membership is 'long and dishonourable', having in the recent past justified slavery, women's subjugation, European imperialism, workers' disenfranchisement and forced labour for those without employment. Cosmopolitan liberalism's spectre of a 'citizenship test' that might remove rights from those born into a nation who cannot or will not contribute to its economy, and assign them to those who move into the nation and can do so, leaves Jordan and Düvell (p. 121) noting the need for 'extensive modifications of the rights given to citizens, and the powers of national political communities', without making clear exactly which changes they favour.

It is in the work of Ahmed et al. that the micro-level aspects of migration are most fully investigated. This volume offers a novel theoretical framework that shifts attention away from mobility and instead to the relationship between migration and 'staying at home'. It insists on the need to understand the other side of migration: staying put either through choice or compulsion. For example, freedom to migrate may be curtailed – and the question of who stays behind needs to be considered. Inability to move might be enforced – a fate already experienced by the Palestinians. The book's central theme then is to undermine conventional perspectives on migration, which prioritize movement, and to promote a perspective that hinges on an analysis of the relationship between migration and 'being sedentary', for example, through the effects of migration on grounded communities (e.g. indigenous Australians).

In resisting universalizing assumptions, these authors address micro-political issues through themes that link migration with the body and the family. Their broadening of the concept to any act of leaving one's home for a new (or rediscovered) one creates space for discussions of 'queer migration', women's role in migrant community-building, and the search for other-country roots by the settled descendants of past economic migrants. All of these themes link up with the idea of social capital or the familial and friendship networks that migrant communities create. The connection between migration and embodiment is most ably carried out in the chapter on contemporary Palestinian art, which convincingly explores the ways migration is expressed in images of the body and the role of power relations in this. Instead of focusing on the national home through the metaphorical lens of 'the motherland', the author concentrates instead on how displacement and dispossession is expressed through the body, citing for example, the work of artist Mona Hatoum whose 1983 *Negotiating Table* involved her lying on a table covered with guts, bandages and blood.

How successful are these books in delivering on their objectives? In *The*

*Age of Migration*, Castles and Miller comprehensively cover the major theoretical and empirical approaches to migration. The authors offer well-informed surveys of the literature, which are an invaluable resource for students and academics. However, they go beyond the textbook by presenting an original angle on themes such as the management of migration and the impact of migration on internal ethnic relations and the host political system. In this vein, for example, the book explores the effect of Islam as a new political force in Western Europe. The arguments and solutions presented are cautious rather than radical, reflecting the book's social policy orientation – readers might feel important themes such as the role of immigration controls are treated conservatively. The treatment of migration and ageing populations could have benefited from a more imaginative consideration of generational turnover.

In *Migration: The Boundaries of Equality and Justice*, Jordan and Düvell attempt a more ambitious project, combining summaries of modern debates on globalization, migration and liberalism with an attempt to fashion coherent new models out of them. But this results in significant departures from the title – indeed only a small part of the book deals directly with migration – with the authors frequently extrapolating from social welfare to migration. The book also suffers from a tendency to paraphrase and critique various solutions without passing any particular judgement on them and arguments dismissed at the start of the book tend to be partially rehabilitated later. This eclectic approach makes the reader uncertain about what the authors are actually prescribing. While they justify a high level of abstraction – even from their own very diverse research findings – by the desire to find long-term rather than short-term solutions, this results in an approach that could be viewed as utopian, and may not offer much to those politicians, state agencies and charities looking for immediate guidance on how to handle a fast-changing migratory situation.

Ahmed et al.'s *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration* is the most original of the three books reviewed, setting out an innovative framework for understanding migration and challenging commonplace assumptions and bringing together a rich and diverse set of case studies. It succeeds in showing the importance of considering migration through the relationship between moving and staying; the micro-level analysis of aspects of migration is often fascinating and the authors convincingly show the need to continue to acknowledge the importance of spatialized power relations. As an edited collection, it necessarily varies in quality – in some of the chapters the language used lapses into jargon (e.g. 'our ontological relationship to land is a condition of our embodied subjectivity' [p. 36]), which could potentially undermine the credibility of postcolonialist and feminist theorizing. One wonders also whether the concept of migration is being stretched so far that it loses analytical value.

## CONCLUSION

A key theme that unites these studies is that the new global context demands a fresh look at migration, one that pays attention to its differentiated nature and the emergence of new types of cross-border movement requiring new types of social and policy response. The empirical evidence confirms not only the wide range of motives that lead to (and experiences that follow from) migration, but also the establishment of a new transnational 'migration industry', whose political handling has the potential to provide social protection for migrants as well as expose them to exploitation. They thus make a case for refining both globalization theories' system-based and anthropologists' agency-based assessments of migration, showing that these are only sustainable if accompanied by an analysis of bounded power relations. They suggest that macro- and micro-level analyses need to retain a focus on boundaries, national and regional, as well as supranational institutions and transnational networks and activities.

However, the intellectual difficulty of bridging micro- and macro-level studies is illustrated in the gulf between the first of these titles, which captures most clearly the individual-level politics and pain of migration policies, and the second and third, which are concerned mainly with macro-level analysis. Castles and Miller skilfully overview the present state of migration studies, while Jordan and Düvell take a bold first step towards sketching new social policy solutions. However, they do more to highlight than to resolve the increasingly visible clash between adoption of a 'flexible' and 'globalized' labour market, dependent on labour movement within and across national boundaries, and traditional citizenship/welfare arrangements based on permanent residence. Interesting new angles are more evident in Ahmed et al., who are the most successful in challenging dominant theoretical frameworks and creating new research agendas.

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