

The background of the cover is a photograph showing the silhouettes of a large group of people standing on a beach or pier, looking out at the ocean during a sunset. The sky is a warm, orange-pink color, and the silhouettes are dark against it. The people are in various poses, some standing, some sitting, and some looking towards the horizon.

Migration Practice as Creative Practice

An Interdisciplinary
Exploration of Migration

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Migration Practice as Creative Practice: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Migration

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Foreword

During the Covid-19 crisis, migration came to a sudden standstill as countries closed their border to contain the spread of the virus. Since the beginning of humanity, however, migration has been the norm, even though regularly, aided by whatever reason, countries have tried to stop migration, and in particularly stopping people from entering their countries or kingdoms. Migration has always been happening throughout history, and people will continue to migrate across the globe when countries are opening again. However, migration has also been at the forefront of a darker narrative around protection of country's own people against the 'foreign intruder'. Racism, xenophobia and populism have traditionally evolved around the notion of the stranger, who wants to migrate and take possession of some of the wealth or resources of a country and their people. It is sad to ascertain that this is not something from a dark past, but alive in our current times, where right-wing populism is on the rise again and countries are not just closing their borders to contain the spread of Covid-19, but also to keep immigrants and refugees out of their countries.

To be able to effectively understand and address such issues, it is needed to understand better the dynamics underpinning migration. This book edited by Dr Dieu Hack-Polay and colleagues offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study and understanding of migration as creative practice. It focuses on the social and societal issues and construction of migration, and offers great understandings of how migration is viewed in contemporary society.

This book is an enormously important and timely book that offers 17 different and great chapters on migration, which will help the reader understand better how migration can be perceived in our contemporary societies. It does so not only by offering theoretical understandings of the subject matter, but also by offering multiple chapters on how migration can be studied methodologically. Using a number of innovative methodological techniques, such as narrative and metaphor research methodologies, this book will further our understanding of how migration can be studied more effectively.

Beyond all, this book presents both statistics and numbers on the impact of migration and how discourses on migration are constructed, as well as more particular narratives of migration experiences. Jointly they picture an academic topic that is extremely important in our society, and is a must-read for anyone who is concerned about the ever-growing hostility of particularly Western countries towards immigrants and non-whites more broadly. To understand the causes of such hostility is necessary, yet insufficient, and we need to be engaged in

more debate around how we can effectively change our societies for the better, and be truly welcoming nations for anyone who has to (involuntarily) leave their country due to famine, war or persecution.

While the Covid-19 crisis has (once again) shown the detrimental side-effects of globalism through the rapid spread of the deadly virus across the world, we are now faced with a rising need to sustain our communities locally. This means economic independence of communities is highly needed to address the devastating effects of our human invention to move globally, and ship goods across the globe, with all associated pollution. However, this may never mean that we should de-identify as anti-globalists who stop to care about their fellow human beings wherever in this world, and who are less fortunate and privileged. The duty of Western countries remains to be compassionate and to stop neo-colonial practices such that modern forms of exploitation, including the negative portrayal of immigrants, can become part of history once and for all.

The Black Lives Matter Movement and its resurgence in 2020 is a reminder to all white people that they have a duty to their fellow citizens and to migrants. This duty involves not just stating that one is against racism, but this includes the necessity to understand and to empathy. This book is a great contribution in this respect – the wide variety of authors, from such different backgrounds and with such a variety of expertise, has provided a book that is not just of great academic importance, but to each of us personally as well, readers with a genuine interest in understanding what migration means to the world, our societies, our workplaces, and to ourselves.

Prof. Matthijs Bal
University of Lincoln

Chapter 1

Introduction

Dieu Hack-Polay

This section sets the context of the book and creates connections between the various chapters. It elucidates the hotly debated notion of migrant, given the numerous types of migrants, understanding that many of these categorisations intersect and overlap. A refugee may have economic difficulties as well as political, social or religious motivations to flee a homeland. An economic migrant may be looking for work away from home because he or she has been forced off the land by climate change, and so might also be described as a climate refugee or forced migrant. This section of the book addresses the theoretical perspectives on migration to clarify these labels and contingencies.

Perspectives on Migration

Academic investigations that examine migrant issues have not consistently mirrored the multiple dimensions of migratory crises. For example, Hack-Polay (2016) and [Duke, Sales, and Gregory \(1999\)](#) have suggested that scholarly investigations have been inconsequential and thrived in countries taken in isolation; such research usually concentrated on the narrow subjects of mental illness, housing, work and training. There has been a historical deficiency in conventional academic writings in terms of work that link migrants, nation-building and the macroeconomic parameters of human movements. Coverage in the social sciences has not been proportionate with what we see as migrants' central place in constructing the nation from an economic, identity and cultural standpoint. This critical lack of gusto for migration research is outlined by Pittaway, Bartolomei, and Hugman (2010) and [Stein \(1986\)](#). There have been some changes in the recent decades, particularly in the last three decades. Migration research centres have been set up ([Hack-Polay & Siwale, 2018](#)) and grounded research networks initiated on the basis of praxis (Pittaway et al., 2010). In spite of millions of migrants venturing in new geo-cultural spheres in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, migrant research remains somewhat intermittent and random.

Whilst there are more courses available in refugee studies, migration studies and questions related to human movement (such as climate change), it is arguable that Academic research in migration is still disproportionately small compared

with the magnitude of twentieth century global migratory movements and historical human migration generally. In the twentieth century, [Duke et al. \(1999\)](#) point out a number of cross-national investigations (e.g. [Hack-Polay, 2019](#); [Joly, 1996](#); [Joly & Cohen, 1989](#)). They argued that these research endeavours centred mainly on critical migratory events in the 1980s mainly at a time most migrants into Europe arrived via supported schemes. Through these sponsored schemes, new migrants were awarded recognised legal status, usually on entering the country of exile. The migrant situation the year 2000 has evolved owing to increased ideological, legal, economic and political interferences which stir up novel controversies. These changes ought to bring about novel data in the area of migration research. The interest of researcher in migration issues is awoken when there are significant human migratory explosions and tragedies, e.g. Second World War, of the 2004 entry of Eastern European countries to European Union (EU). Researchers have been slow at engaging with migration research, which signifies that advanced investigations are undertaken mainly when migratory phenomena blow out of proportion ([Hack-Polay, 2016](#); [Stein, 1986](#)). Approaching the study of the lives of migrants this way does not reflect well that the close linkages between migration and contemporary globalisation. Fundamentally, migration can be viewed as one of the major social phenomena part of the second half of the twentieth century and this early part of the current century. The triggers of past migrations still explain current migratory movements, though modern causes have come to pin themselves on the traditional causes to exacerbate the issue. In fact, significant global forces have emerged, which show interconnectedness in human existence. For instance, improved international travels and increased regional alliances contribute to weakening or even the removal of national borders, which serve as enabling factors that lead to more migratory movements in the world. The expansion of cross-border trade results in the increasing numbers of organizations venture on the global paths, causing more mobility of the productive forces. There is limited room for social scientists to develop expertise in this field and create a viable conceptual as well as a theoretical framework in the long term. From this standpoint, there is the necessity to deploy more research expertise to study the migrant experience; this will increase the understanding that the research community seeks to bring about perceptual changes to the ways migrants are seen in our globalising world. The main claim of the book is positioned in this framework.

The outcome of this book is not the formulation of a general migration theory, but rather to highlight a number of challenging issues and ideas concerning the migration experience which can help arrive at an appreciation of the place that migrants occupy in human existence, regardless of space and time. The conclusions of this book are helpful as they represent an expansion of previous social investigations and form a conceptualisation of the experiences of people who, by choice or coercion, live away from their birth country or that of their habitual residence. We neither advocate that completely new semantic fields have been developed nor that systematic conceptual frameworks have been created. Research in migration is not field that can be said to be a ready-made. It does not have a significant body of standard textbooks, a theoretical structure, a systematic

body of data and even a firm definition of the subject or the field (Stein, 1986). Ideally, a new approach to data collection, collation and analysis would mirror the development of some newer social sciences such as management science constructed on the backbones of several disciplines but whose existence is justified by the growth of modern organisations and business.

Our book debates the construction of the migration experiences and the traditionally loose attitudes to integration. We argue that *laissez-faire* is in fact not favourable to integration nor to the rational deployment of the significant potential cultural richness and immense skills to host countries by migrants. Meanwhile, converging perspectives contend that migrants are the foundations of viable national socio-economic and cultural developments. Indeed, this book supports the perspective that migrants do not simply integrate into existing national entities, they build the nation. This case is consistently made through the book, corroborating the argument that there are no nations that have survived without migratory influxes over time. The creativity and cultural mix which derive from the actions of incoming populations benefit the collective. True progress derives from the sharing of experience, perspective, and forms of cultural action.

Misrepresentation of the Migrant Experience

The migration experience presents constancies and these are acknowledged at various levels. An important similarity in the migrant experience originates from the thought that migrant groups ghettoise themselves or are isolated by the receiving communities (Hack-Polay, 2019). This tends to happen owing to the lack of clarity in strategies for migrant integration at a national or regional level to culturally and economically, absorb newcomers into the local community fabrics. The newcomers, thus, attempt to select a place within already segregated collectivities with a dominance of ethnic minorities, and particularly those from the new migrants' ethnic origins. A move such as this is directly a pull factor from the well-established ethnic groups and a push factor from the host communities. In fact, many receiving country governments behave as passive bystanders of this cultural and ethnic division process, allowing ghettoization of migrant groups into ethnic clusters. There is evidence that generally a sizeable number of migrants descend into the under-class because of the lack of viable opportunities (Hack-Polay & Mendi, 2017; Hack-Polay & Igwe, 2019). Additionally, effective integration actions for new migrants are hampered by the negative racist campaigns and discourses that originate from amidst the very spheres of society that are tasked with assisting the new migrants, e.g. local officials, the media and some community leaders. Some of these host groups have professed discourses of disunion and segregation. These are often more dangerous than the threats posed by individual members of the locality because discourses emanating from the top are heard and mediated, for example in recent years the current British Prime Minister has likened Asian Muslim women to pillars and letter boxes (BBC, 2018).

Migrants are very enterprising and need only a small push to unleash their creativity which has over the centuries served nations Mendy & Hack-Polay (2018). It is not a secret that the success of major economies and cultures such as the United States, Canada and Australia is built on migrant labour and the population itself is ensured maintenance due to migration flows. Up to the present time, the USA still admit around a million immigrants each year because it is clear the economy cannot survive without their contributions. Australia, Canada and New Zealand in the same way pursue large migrant recruitment campaigns for demographic and economic reasons. What is less easily documented is the extent to which migrants are respected on arrival, and how they are categorised in the context of state support, visas and long-term opportunity. The affordance of present and future benefits to migrants differs from human rights and prerogatives. The latter values are constructed by nations based on their interests. Migrants to the UK have experienced brutal short-term thinking in the host nation, whereby their contributions to the nation are measured against functional, immediate, needs and dismissed when those are no longer valued or understood. This can in effect negate whole life stories. In the UK, the case of the Gurkha fighters is one such. As British colonial subjects they were brought to the battle frontlines to fight for the nation; however, they faced enormous legal issues to have their rights of abode in the UK recognised until recently in the late 2010s. It is an ethical duty for countries such as the UK to allow people of all ethnic that served the nation to be treated in a dignified way in our human community.

Migrant populations may also claim mutual experience that attach to aspects of ethnicity and the impact of nostalgia. The migration experience can be profoundly submerged in psychosocial disruptions that require early vigorous actions so as to stir greater and more positive integration at the same time as making space for the economic contributions of migrants, the development of social and cultural capital (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1995). Ethnicity is not always a differentiating factor in terms of the racialization, social isolation and the social mobility of new migrants in a given new social context. All newcomers report experiencing the stigma of pessimisms linked to immigrant status, mainly due to fierce political and media propaganda. The creative energies that migrants can deploy are dependent on multiple considerations, e.g. the help provided on arrival, the experienced level of social mobility and level of deprivation, in the host country (Hack-Polay, 2019). The association between the settlement experience and migrants' contributions to their new collectivities from generation to generation is expressed via contrasting the experience of migrants who arrived through sponsored programmes and the experiences of the migrants who were not supported (Hack-Polay, 2019). Essentially, there is a vast amount of work that demonstrates higher performance of migrants (Castles & Kosack, 1973; Castles & Miller, 1993), and that evidence is the main substance of this book. Well-planned and intelligible integration approaches produce positive outcomes. In contrast, an ad hoc method to settling issues faced by migrant can confine the migrants and their hosts to disappointment Mendy & Hack-Polay (2018). At the very least, the ad hoc approach might lead the new nation in the medium and long-term to

view migrants in terms of socio-economic burdens whilst migrants perceive the host society as thankless for the contributions they make. This antagonism leads both groups to navigate in separate directions (Berry, 1986), leaving limited scope for the development of mutually compatible and acknowledged formations of citizenship both for the first generations and future generations of migrants.

Our book provides an understanding of migrant experiences and establishes how migrant integration to the new societies might be rethought. More specifically, emphasis is placed on the degree to which migrants' capabilities should be deployed more positively in the new countries. There is a sense in which the deep capacity of migrant populations is frozen through generations of misrecognition and disrespect. States, populations, regions, need to find the way to reverse this process so that the flow of talent, hope, and capacity flow more freely.

Structure of the Book

The book is divided into five main sections and 16 chapters. Part I explores historical perspectives on migration and reconceptualises the degree to which migration is inherent to human societies and has been perpetuated through millennia. However, perceptions of migrants generally in society, and in the media and political arenas particularly, remain broadly pessimistic. Part II examines the integration of migrants in host societies, specifically focusing on identity construction as well as inter-group and intra-group solidarity. Part III is concerned with how migrants navigate the host economic structures and the contributions they make despite the significant challenges they face. Part IV considers the influence that migration and migrants have exerted on the reformation of social policies in host countries, which helped in the transformation of the wider societies. Finally, Part V brings to light the theoretical and methodological contribution to the investigation and research in the social sciences and the degree to which extensive interest in migration research has brought about new ways of approaching social realities from a qualitative standpoint.

The authors hope you enjoy the book's holistic approach to seeing the migrant experience and that this can help reshape how, collectively, our community of researchers and practitioners could contribute to normalising the migration experience and change perceptions.

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Part 1

Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Migration

Here we are concerned with the historical construction of migration and what that signifies in the modern global world. We consider various discourses on migrants and how these discourses can often undermine the creative energy brought by migrants.

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