

Pieter Bevelander & Bo Petersson (eds.), *Crisis and Migration. Implications of the Eurozone Crisis for Perceptions, Politics, and Policies on Migration* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2014)

The volume addresses some of the consequences for the European Union (EU) of the prolonged economic crisis resulting from the 2008 implosion of Wall Street's financial wizardry. One particular consequence, or area of concern, is at the heart of the essays included in the volume, i.e. migration, meaning chiefly, though by no means exclusively, the movement of people from outside the EU into the EU. Albeit clear, relevant and useful statistics are offered both in the introductory chapter by the book's editors (pp. 9-24) and in the second chapter, penned by economics professor T. Hatton (pp. 25-47), theoretical issues of socio-cultural perception are given more room in the book's studies than empirical issues of demographics, econometrics and/or specific legislative acts.

The cause for this thematic predominance is fairly simple to explain. First of all, as a universal rule, conceptions of reality determine how the legislator or the government thinks about the world, what sort of policies or rules result thereof, and what statistics may be requested or how statistics are interpreted. Businessmen and trade unionists are equally constrained in their agency by the ways in which they conceive of themselves, their socio-economic functions, and the world around them. Not to mention what social scientists themselves decide to observe and how to measure it: no matter how positivistic one's own methodological creed may be, theory precedes and informs observation and measurement.

What is more, with few exceptions such as France and the UK, the international economic slump seems to have slowed down the migratory fluxes at issue. There are not only fewer resources around to engage in a flight from outside the EU; there are also fewer opportunities available within the EU. Yet, the notion of migration *qua* major social problem in need of political and legal redress has persisted nonetheless, somewhat intensified through the non-decisive yet visible gains of xenophobic political parties, and occasionally turned sour in specific cases (e.g. neo-fascist trends in Greece, as discussed in E. Tampakoglou's chapter, pp. 103-30, and murderous xenophobia in Norway, with reference to the "massacre... carried out by Breivik" in the name of defending "Europe" from the "threat" of migrating "Islam", p. 174).

Of the seven research chapters that the book comprises, four focus squarely upon the

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conceptualisation of migrants, as expressed by the key-terms of those chapters (“discursive articulations” in L. Kullving’s, pp. 49-76; “political discourse” in E. Tampakoglou’s; “construction” and “narrative” in S. Scuzzarello, pp. 131-56; “representation” in K. Hirvonen, pp. 157-76), two deal with it in connection with more specific policy issues (i.e. the “articulations” of irregular incoming foreigners *vis-à-vis* immigration policies in Holland discussed by H. Jongen, pp. 77-102, and the “cultural” construction of migrant pickpockets by the Danish police in Copenhagen discussed by D. Sausdal, pp. 177-204), and the last one does not eschew it for it looks closely at how “public opinion” about migration has changed in connection with the crisis (T.J. Hatton’s chapter).

Specifically, T.J. Hatton’s chapter offers a comprehensive overview of migratory trends before and during the slump—the crisis not being over, it makes no sense to speak of an “after” yet. Also, it analyses how the economic slump has made the overall tone of political language more exclusionary but has not yet produced any major political backlash; rather, the slump has affected directly and in a negative manner the immigrant population of the EU, since the immigrant population is found regularly among the most vulnerable tiers of society and labour force.

Kullving’s chapter addresses some of the ways in which the language of EU bureaucrats and decision-makers has characterised the migrant population and, as a result, what sort of policies have been promoted and/or implemented. Typically, the language chosen to define, describe and direct the migrant persons has coloured them as threats or problems, which then translate into antagonistic politics and policies that find a symbolic expression in the thousands of “migrants died” in “the Mediterranean Sea” while “seeking protection” in the EU (p. 72).

Jongen’s chapter explores a perplexing and highly revealing contradiction, which he deems “a clash of securitisations” (p. 88), emerging from the Dutch immigration policies over the past two decades. Governments have been attempting to regulate and reduce irregular immigration by stricter legislative measures, accompanying them with tougher political language and posturing, yet the results have been the opposite of what was intended. Moreover, as such language and posturing have been gaining momentum, the regular immigrant population has found itself labeled and perceived more and more as a threat or a

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problem, which did not exist before such language and posturing became commonplace.

Tampakoglou's chapter reviews the dramatic effects of the US-born crisis in Greece, which has faced the risk of sovereign default and avoided it *via* an EU- and IMF-dictated austerity programme producing a prolonged economic depression and devastatingly life-disabling socio-demographic effects affecting most negatively "immigrants and vulnerable groups" (p. 122). Politically, Greece is said to have shown also the most forceful growth of virulently "anti-immigration rhetoric" in the national media and dominant political discourses, as well as incurred in the most serious risks of "dismantl[ing] democracy" altogether (pp. 122-3; the author does not discuss the case of Hungary, another member of the EU).

Scuzzarello's chapter discusses policy actors' understandings of "integration" and, conversely, "non-integration" within the urban context of Malmö, Sweden (p. 131). The ways in which, *inter alia*, local administrators, social workers and the police "construct" an image of what constitutes successful and unsuccessful migrants are said to reflect the "pervasiveness of liberal values of entrepreneurship, efficiency and employability" in the dominant mindset and at the same time neglect the increased marginalisation "of disadvantaged groups", especially immigrants, that resulted as the local administrators moved to "re-brand the city and attract new capital" after "the financial crisis of the 1990s" (p. 152). *In nuce*, groups that, two decades ago, were excluded from the city's recovery *via* gentrification are now being hurt by the slump and blamed as inactive, inefficient and unemployed (or unemployable), thus paying twice the price for financial crises that they did not cause.

Hirvonen's chapter sails over the vast seas of the world-wide-web in order to chart the right-wing extremist groups of Europe and depict the neglected ideological and organisational backdrop for Anders Behring Breivik's notorious 2011 terrorist attacks in Norway. The reader is thus confronted with a diverse but fairly consistent constellation of xenophobic, Islamophobic, neo-fascist, anti-immigration and variously right-wing advocates of social exclusion and even violence that, though politically marginal *per se*, legitimise and reinforce intolerant discourses in mainstream media and political arenas.

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Sausdal's chapter faces the recent increase in pickpocketing in Denmark and, in particular, in the capital city of Copenhagen. After presenting relevant statistical data, the author commences a qualitative study of the Danish police's perceptions and response strategies, which reveal a cultural or sub-cultural undergrowth of stereotypes, sweeping generalisations, rationalisations and irrationalities, both at the individual and at the policy level, that, if developed further, could teach much about intercultural understandings and misunderstandings.

The chapters of this book are all written clearly and intelligently. Taken together, they make for an engaging read. Moreover, they provide much useful information for social scientists, policy-makers, journalists and students at large that may be interested in acquiring a better understanding of the effects of the ongoing economic crisis on migration patterns and, above all, on popular perceptions of migration in few select and especially Nordic countries. I write "in few select and especially Nordic countries" because, apart from the broader geographical spectrum of the chapters by Hatton and Kullving and the chapters on Holland and Greece, the remaining three chapters deal with either Swedish or Danish cases. This is certainly fine as concerns a book published by NAP, but it is perplexing given the book's subtitle, which refers to the "Eurozone". Neither Sweden nor Denmark belongs to it. In short, almost half of the chapters deal with cases that do not pertain to the Eurozone as such.

Somewhat perplexing are also the lack of an analytical index and the one-directedness of the conceptual exchanges between the sociological and the economic domains. As the latter point is concerned, the book acknowledges from the start (p. 9) the origins of the ongoing crisis in the self-inflicted collapse of international high finance and later introduces the insightful concept of "securitisation", borrowed from the economists' jargon, with regard to incongruous immigration policies. No sociological reflection reverts back to finance, however. Thus, the applicability of "migration" to capital trade is not pursued and the related strategic notion of regulation left untouched. Nor is the concept of "securitisation" seen for what it is in the first place, namely the cause of the crisis that stands written large on the book's front cover. The infamous 'toxic assets' that choked the world's largest financial institutions and kick-started the ongoing crisis are nowhere to be seen in the book, yet their poisoned outcomes are visible in each and every one its chapters. Indeed, something is present in the book concerning blue-collar crime (e.g. pickpocketing) as a by-product of the crisis, but nothing is said about white-collar crime (e.g. massive tax evasion, Ponzi schemes, the Libor and Euribor scandals) constituting the mucky soil out of which the crisis sprang in 2008. Even

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if the book's introduction suggests otherwise, its contributors might think such matters not to be part of their research horizon. Were that so, however, then they would be paying insufficient heed to the etiology of the phenomena that they discuss and therefore limit their ability to envision solutions to the problems that they address (e.g. where to find the resources for well-funded immigration policies).

Minor deficiencies notwithstanding, the book is a valid token of research and should appeal to a large audience of academic and professional readers.

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