

Book Review

Uma A Segal, Doreen Elliot, Nazneen S. Mayadas (Eds). 2010. Immigration Worldwide: Policies, Practices, and Trends. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pages: 473

Where and when does the immigration experience begin? It begins long ago and ends long after the designated ports of entry: realizing the need to move from one's own country, to become an emigrant from the country of birth and continues till one is settled in the country of adoption. In one way, it is impossible to regulate migration. People have been migrating from one part of the world to another for ages and formal cut-backs on migration flows by imposing regulatory laws and sanctions have always flipped the coin and given the migrating masses the so-called illegal route. This is particularly true of people who migrate under the banner of 'labour'. One can argue as much that all migration is potentially the migration of labour force. From here arise the questions of informal and invisible conduits of labour and its subsequent absorption. Migration across international borders therefore is not completely stopped though restricted and indented from time to time. Migration thus not only occurs due to crises, it is also a search for opportunity. Apart from the people that find their names on the registers of employer firms as migrant labourers, the biggest share of the immigrants, internationally, is formed by the several thousands who are unregistered and are unsolicited the world over. They collectively form the group called refugees.

In this book, the authors try to integrate the question of the migrant with the question of the labour migrant and analyze the problem through the looking glass of supply-demand chain, the latter at least partially, stating that "...international migration is driven by imbalances in supply and demand for labor that promotes low wages in countries where labor is plentiful and higher wages where it is scarce." This certainly encompasses all sorts of migration, voluntary as well as involuntary. By choosing the term 'immigration' and not just displacement, the title also delimits its query in the exchange, movement, transportation of people across international boundaries, that is, from one nation state to another. The book focuses itself on the immigration experiences of the world's population of 200 million international migrants. The editors lay out at the very onset that their aim is to draw "...an account of the state of the art of immigration issues and policies worldwide that includes consideration of some countries and policies not normally considered in a collection of such studies."

In order to accomplish that, it takes up a two-fold model: a) case study of particular nations in order to arrive at theoretical standpoints and

advanced understandings of migration policies followed by different nations; b) a model of policy analysis which would enable analysis of cases. To facilitate that, the editors take up a structured understanding based on push-pull factors and the binary of home and receiving countries while introducing the book. Figure I-I (Page 4) provides a framework/model to be used as a tool to understand the problem that they bring to the table. From that, it proceeds to nuanced understanding of particular regions, following the nation-state paradigm and dividing the lot into three groups, namely, nations with large immigrant populations (United States, Russia, Germany, Canada, India, United Kingdom, Australia for example); nations with increasing immigrant populations (like Greece, Ireland, Israel, Portugal, Thailand etc); and nations with low or declining immigrant populations (for example, Egypt, Taiwan, China, South Africa, Brazil etc.). Additionally, it makes available an analysis of regional movements: citing the cases of the African Union and the European Union and describing the to and fro passages that probably fall short of immigration in the strict sense of the term but are movements of people in search of opportunity none the less. Therefore, it upholds some key countries in the circuit of migration and performs an analysis of the policies and trends that characterize such migratory movements. In doing so, it follows the commonly appearing attributes of migration studies by speaking about voluntary and involuntary migration, disasters, political instability, fear of persecution, use of gender as a tool to understand immigration issues etc.

The book succeeds in its mission because it relies on experts in particular kinds of migration studies and from particular countries to speak about the respective fields and countries. This brings about the justice that has been done to the multitude of issues under the banner of migration, enabling the broad base of study. The contributors include academics and practitioners in the field of immigration. The second chapter divides migration into four distinct periods in the modern world: the mercantile period (1500-1800), the industrial period (1800-1925), the limited migration period (1930-1960), and the period of post industrial migration (1960s to 1990s). These periods are linked to the different phases of accumulation of capital and therefore exhibit upward and downward movements. With the maturing of each phase of capitalism, the migration patterns in the corresponding period assumed increasingly complex character. For example, Massey (1999) says, the migration boom in the industrial period between 1800 and 1925 is directly linked with the economic growth that Europe saw during the mercantile period, due to which, there was a considerable exodus of European migrants from countries like Britain, Italy, Norway, Spain, and Sweden to America to gain from the New World's growing economy. The treatment of migration in such a light, definitely hints at a labour demand-supply based understanding of migration. Thus, during the next big phase of migratory movements, the traditionally sending countries became receiving countries as well as increasingly, the factories needed to be fed with labour supply. At this juncture, Asians entered the migration circuit.

Industrialization in Asian countries like Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong led to population movements responding to labour needs of the new industrial and technological economies too. This led to lifting of immigration controls in several countries.

The authors posit that towards the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first; there is a fifth phase of global migration process when the erstwhile loosening immigration policies are tightening up once again. This is a period marked by increasing restrictiveness, especially in the developed world. While goods and capital assets flow freely, movement of labour is severely restricted. After entering the developed countries, such immigrants gain a price much higher than they would do in their own countries, while, at the same time, much lower when compared to the standards of the host countries. Moreover, as irregular migrants, their rights of bargaining and other basic rights remain infringed. Question is raised whether in the projected fifth phase of migration, with temporary transnational migrant labour on the increase at any given point of time; newer categories of labour migration will become recognized and institutionalized with better and more sensitive regulation of the borders? Most importantly, with such transit labour becoming increasingly common phenomena, a framework for recognition of their rights surely becomes important.

What becomes important in this country specific approach, dealing with one country at a time, is that, all possible typologies under the broader fix of migration get covered. The editors try to allay the apprehension of piece meal treatment by stating the obvious that the study of immigration is interdisciplinary in nature and the nature of explanatory theory will be defined by the academic discipline from which the student comes. Moreover, they claim that mid-level theories could be best tools for this purpose. Massey forwards six theory groups that could be used in immigration studies (new economics of migration, neoclassical economics, segmented labour market theory, world systems theory, social capital theory, and cumulative causation) and an additional seventh group that transcends the definitive framework principle, while stopping short of the grand theory syndrome.

To conclude, the editors perform a chapter wise review and say that countries with high immigrant flows may be suffering from compassion fatigue which is why both immigration and immigrant policies tend to become stringent there. Increasing immigration in Western Europe is a response to labour needs of their growing economies and the fact that these were originally belts of emigration (and therefore low native population). Therefore policies and programs of entry and integration are receptive. The issues under scanner are like changing political boundaries that render populations more volatile; issues of immigrant integration; rendering of the immigrant status to a person moving from one nation to another across national boundaries, which are in themselves beyond common people's logic, and constructed at citadels of power; and the social capital necessary

to re-establish oneself post migration. The last one is most critical to any kind of immigration, rises above rules and regulations and decides whether at all an immigrant will be able to find home in a new place.

By **Geetisha Dasgupta***

* Is a graduate student at the SUNY, Binghamton University
Refugee Watch, 38, December 2011