

## BOOK REVIEWS

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Helen Vella Bonavita (ed.), **Negotiating Identities: Constructed Selves and Others**, *Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011, 217 pp.*, (ISBN: 978-90-420-3400-6) (paper).

The book presents a number of papers arising from an inter-disciplinary conference 'Strangers, Aliens and Foreigners' held in Oxford in 2009. It is an element of the *Diversity and Recognition* hub of the Inter-Disciplinary. Net, 'which provides opportunities for scholars from all disciplines and nationalities to meet and discuss key issues surrounding migration, globalisation, the self and the foreign.' The range of material covered here is indeed stimulating and demonstrates the potential of these 'key issues' to generate research and debate across, and to interrogate the legitimacy of, disciplinary boundaries. The introduction, however, appears to promise a coherence which the individual papers do not offer.

The final paragraph of the introduction suggests that the 'conversation' in which the papers participate is concerned with the needs of *individuals* 'to create a fixed meaning for a national identity', but then moves seamlessly to a rather nebulous argument about how each paper 'reflects on the fact that the strange, the alien, the foreign...are the forces which shape the community, and with which the community shapes itself.' It is, incidentally, odd that in a reference to 'the imagined community' as a key concept, this is not attributed to Benedict Anderson. While some of the papers indeed sit comfortably within these broad categories, the fit for others is awkward. Joshua Getz's for example, uses Levinas's account of the irreducible nature of the encounter with the Other as a model for reading Anne Michael's novel *Fugitive Pieces*. This is appropriate and illuminating, but while one can argue that the paper does engage centrally with the concept of the 'strange, alien and foreign', the issues of 'creating fixed meaning for a national identity are not part of the discussion. In at least one other case, the need to ensure 'fit' appears to leave the author struggling to fit the pattern. Kevin M. DeLapp's 'Ancient Egypt as Europe's Intimate Stranger' offers an interesting, if somewhat forced reading of John Rawls's theory of justice and Edward Said's of Orientalism as 'models for framing cross-cultural encounters'. But having demonstrated the problems of framing such encounters with theories which do not take on board issues of asynchronicity, he ends with the observation that 'today we are in a somewhat more fortunate hermeneutic position when we encounter strangers, aliens and foreigners because we have the possibility to establish a synchronous relationship.' It is not clear what this adds to the argument other than gesturing at the need to fit the book's claim to coherence.

Elsewhere theory sometimes appears gestural, with Zizek, Lacan, Said, Hall and Bhabha flung into the mix with inadequate analysis. The book's strengths are, rather, in specificity and diversity. So, the role of cartography and spatial strategies in constructing the fictions that sustain a sense of nationality is explored by Elsa Peralta. For more conventional literary analysis, we have Helen Vella Bonavita's account of three



plays, including Shakespeare's about England's 'Bad King John' which offer a persuasive account of 'alienation and assimilation mediated through literature'. Winter Werner's analysis of the journals of celebrated English actor Fanny Kemble, a woman of liberal and reformist principles, who became the wife of a West Indian slave owner, demonstrates the part which her sense of English identity played in the 'ideological and rhetorical strategies' she adopted. For a British reader it was particularly fascinating to discover such relatively unknown history as that offered by Ron Greaves's account of the 'unique Muslim community' in Liverpool at the end of the nineteenth century, inspired by Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam, an English lawyer who had converted to Islam in 1887 while travelling in Morocco. Greaves points out that 'debates around gender separation, dress codes' and a range of other social practices, all took place in the context of 'producing Islam in a new cultural space.'

Greaves's paper is sub-titled 'New Models of Citizenship in an Emerging Age of Globalisation' and is one of those which are suggestive of positive political outcomes from a better understanding of the construction of the alien. Central here are two empirical studies, one by Audrey Verma's paper on 'The Purported Use of Sorcery by Female Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore' and another by Lelia Green and Anne Aly's research on 'How Australian Muslims Construct Western Fear of the Muslim Other' Green and Aly make sustained and productive reference to the Verma paper and to Verma's suggestion that 'the power remaining to the powerless is one of disturbing the social equilibrium.' As they point out: 'The sorcery accusation inverts the true order of objective social and political power in that the weak is feared by the strong; and also the accused by the strong as part of a defence against guilt.' Green and Aly's own findings on the very different responses of majority and minority populations to the 'message' of the Australian media on the 'threat' of Islam support the tenor of Verma's analysis. The conclusion which they draw makes a powerful point about existing power relations and one which could perhaps serve to bring together the coherence from diversity which the introduction sought to establish: 'The implication [of the findings] is that in order for the West to reduce its fear of the other it must effect a partial redistribution of power.'

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Theodoros Iosifides, **Qualitative Methods in Migration Studies, A Critical Realist Perspective**, Oxford: Ashgate Publishing, 2011, 278 pp., (ISBN13: 978-1-4094-0222-0), (paper).

Theodoros Iosifides has been interested in migration research (mainly in Southern Europe and Greece as a geographical context) and the qualitative methods applied to this field since his doctoral studies at Sussex University, Brighton, UK. In this book, he introduces critical realist perspective in migration studies and puts forward qualitative methods with respect to their explanatory power and emancipatory potential in social research.

The key developments of migratory movements are stated through a chronological order starting with a glance to Europe and North America in the 20th century, which is explained under the title of 'pre-modern migrations'. It is followed by 'industrialization, capitalist development and internal migration' which brought the rapid

urbanization into the scene. Internal migration is further explained before and after World War II. Lastly, 'contemporary trends in international population movements' are discussed in the context of 1970s onwards after the decline of Fordist model of mass production and 'socio-economic structuring' reflected on the socio-economic transformations and global migratory movements.

The complexity and multi-dimensionality of migratory research is demonstrated together with the theoretical and methodological challenges. The main theoretical frameworks in migration studies are indicated as 'micro-level' (originating from economics), 'structuralist' (based on Marxist, Neo-Marxist and other radical tradition shifting from macro to micro level), 'transnationalism and social capital theories' (discussing global migration movements vs. nation state 1990s onwards) along with 'synthetic attempts' (in its regard to complexity, multi-dimensionality and multi-level character of contemporary population movements). Series of theoretical frameworks in migration, especially synthetic ones that are similar to critical realism exist but it is not possible to speak of a critical realist tradition in migration, which adds value to the book presenting critical realist perspective to the field.

The epistemological and methodological approaches to migration research are also discussed setting the factual, theoretical and methodological scene. Critical realist approach is analyzed through its advantages as a meta-theoretical orientation of qualitative methods compared to empiricism, interpretivism and social constructivism. 'Critical' refers to the 'social criticism', which is defined in terms of fallibility of social knowledge. Thus, Iosifides employs critical realism as a reaction to the positivist-empiricist dominance over social sciences that fail to acknowledge the distinction between real objects of social scientific inquiry and theorization. He asserts that qualitative methods are more appropriate in social research in terms of realist frameworks due to their causal explanatory nature and emancipatory potential providing interpretivism, constructionism and relativism. Empiricism and relativism, which are intrinsic to the qualitative social research, constitute the basis for the aforementioned critical realist perspective.

Iosifides, questions the common sense towards the positivist character of quantitative research and the interpretivist character of the qualitative research from the critical perspective. Realist qualitative research is addressed as a more appropriate method for the complexity and multi-dimensionality in migration studies. Despite the fact that qualitative methods are appreciated as a matter of this book, critical realism is defined equal to the 'critical methodological pluralism', which can be understood as a combination between the qualitative and the quantitative methods under the same meta-theoretical framework. It is argued that qualitative and quantitative methods have been perceived opposite to each other instead of being complimentary due to lack of cooperation between the two, inconsistency with respect to ontology and epistemology, and conflicting/eclectic combinations between the two.

The pluralistic nature of critical realist method is illustrated by giving three examples of research in migration: The first one is Bob Carter's (2000) research on 'realism and racism' which takes a realist morphogenetic approach. The second study is done by Han & Davies (2006), which investigates 'medical practices of Korean-speaking doctors and health care service provision to Korean immigrants resided in Sydney, Australia in mid-1990s'. This study uses quantitative interviews and qualitative methods and data in order to link health outcomes to observable processes and events to other "deeper" mostly unobservable factors, usually ignored or underplayed both by interactivist and constructionist research. The third example is a PhD thesis by Hed-

berg (2004) on the 'migration of Finland Swedes'. The significance of the research stems from the complexity of the phenomena, multi-method character and employment of qualitative biographical methods, which corresponds to critical realist meta-theory in a way.

In sum, Iosifides discusses the main qualitative methods in social research in terms of their data and strategies applied to migration studies within a realist framework. The realist qualitative migratory research is presented as explanatory, critical, emancipatory and socio-politically relevant. The latter is related to migration that is recognized as 'politics from below' in which politics are produced by social movements. Therefore realist qualitative migration research can contribute significantly to the 'politics making' which determines the 'socio-political conditions' of practical policy making in Iosifides' terms. Nevertheless, the significance of the book is majorly due to its challenge to the orthodoxy in social sciences through the domination of positivism and interpretivism where Iosifides demonstrates a break out through underpinning the critical realism.

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Puschmann, Paul, **Casablanca. A Demographic Miracle on Moroccan Soil?**, *Leuven: Acco Academic, 2011, 170 pp., (ISBN13: 9789033480683), (paper).*

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Paul Puschmann sets out to explore how, in only a century, the small and provincial town of Dar el Beida with its 25,000 inhabitants turned into today's metropolis of Casablanca with a population of three million. The mechanics behind rural-to-urban migration is Puschmann's main concern, however turning from retrospect to present time the author further points at the difficult effects of extensive internal migration – today's large slum areas of Casablanca. The book rests on three types of sources – secondary literature, statistical accounts and interviews – and gives comprehensive insight into the complex phenomenon of internal migration in a non-Western society.

In the initial chapters of the book, Puschmann paints a picture of Morocco in general and Casablanca in particular in a very informative exposé over time and space. The Casablanca region is shown to be strongly affected by its colonial past, with the establishment of the harbour as one particularly important factor and driving force in the economic and demographic development in the area. Colonialism was, according to the author, a strong exogenous driving force behind the unequal regional development in Morocco, like in many parts of the developing world, and was hence an important factor behind the extensive rural-to-urban migration in the area.

In a broad and empirically well sustained chapter Puschmann seeks to answer, first, the question of why people left the countryside for the more urban areas, and further, why they chose Casablanca over other cities like the administrative centre of Fes. Puschmann initially shows, using extensive economic and demographic data, that the standard of living was lower and the social services poorer in the rural parts of the country than in the urban ones. A dependence on agriculture made recurring droughts fatal to the rural population, and together with increased population pressure and land fragmentation, life in the countryside became utterly difficult for many. Highlighting the different structural reasons for rural out-migration, Puschmann concludes that the

majority of people, or at least the men, leaving the countryside for the city mainly did so for economic reasons. In passing he also states that, for women, reuniting family and other family matters formed the dominating motives for migration, even if he concludes that these motives should also be regarded as related to economic considerations. In the next section, the reasons behind choosing Casablanca over other potential destinations is analysed. Puschmann argues that Casablanca, as compared to other Moroccan cities, showed a greater need for unskilled labour and had higher revenues for workers than Fes, for example. Casablanca hence became a more attractive choice for many uneducated internal migrants.

However, the great in-migration to Casablanca caused difficulties more or less from the beginning. During the first part of the twentieth century, slum dwellers became a common feature of Casablanca's cityscape, and today some 25% of the city's inhabitants live in shanty towns. In the fifth chapter, interviews are used to understand today's slum dwellers and their reasons for migrating to and staying in the city. Puschmann interviews ten people, themselves rural-to-urban migrants and presently slum dwellers. The interviewees, four women and six men who arrived in Casablanca between the years 1936 and 1989, tell fascinating stories about their decision to move to the city, reflect on their present day situation and give life to the statistics presented earlier in the book. The author further constructs an interesting argument from the interviews, partly in opposition to previous migration literature, about negative – or possibly both negative and positive – selection among the rural-to-urban migrants. Puschmann argues that those who left the countryside were mostly the poorest, least educated and those with the worst living situations in their area of departure, proposing that internal migration can hence be understood as a survival strategy.

In the last section of the book, based on his previous findings and the statements in the interviews, Puschmann concludes that Morocco's rural-to-urban migration has been solely determined by the – demonstrably harsh – situation in the countryside. Based on the interviews, the author further finds that the migrants are in fact satisfied with their decision to migrate and leave the countryside for Casablanca and, rather unexpectedly, that they live better in the slums of the city than had they had in the countryside. Puschmann's conclusions are hence that the seemingly miraculous demographic development was no miracle but rather an expected effect of unequal economic development, and that the reasons for this unequal development can be found in the country's colonial history.

However impressive Puschmann's theoretical and empirical evidence of structural causes for out-migration from the countryside and in-migration to Casablanca, and his clear line of argument supporting the understanding that the strongest reasons for internal migration were economy and uneven development, there are still some issues that can be discussed further. My strongest objection concerns the lack of gender sensitivity in the analysis. Puschmann's models of structural causes for migration does, as pointed out in passing by the author himself, concerns mainly the male population, leaving the migration patterns of the women more or less undiscussed. Puschmann's lack of analysis of and reflection on the gendered routes of internal migration does hence not pose mainly a gender problem, but rather a scientific one. A deeper analysis and discussion of the reasons for rural-to-urban migration among women would strengthen the author's argument and further contribute to the theoretical explanation models for internal migration on a broader scale.

Further, the interviews with slum dwellers that form an important part of Puschmann's history of present-day Casablanca are related completely by the author and

unfortunately few, if any, direct quotations are used. This method of re-telling rather than quoting might be space effective and takes the narratives straight to the point, but it strips the stories of their individuality and the migrants' characteristics seem to disappear along the way. Using the words of the migrants themselves rather than the author's interpretation of the narratives would not only contribute to the study's validity but would also allow for the specific individuals' stories to be heard. Yet another issue that remains undiscussed in the interview section of the book concerns the possibility for the rationalisation and reconstruction of life in the countryside as well as reasons for moving and staying, generally considered an important part of understanding migration histories.

Despite the weaknesses pointed out above, Puschmann's book provides an astonishing amount of data and makes a great contribution to the knowledge about both Casablanca specifically and internal migration from a wider perspective. The literature covered is impressive and the history told most fascinating – Puschmann manages to give the reader good coverage of the country's history without losing focus on his specific interest: rural-to-urban migration and its reasons and effects.

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Myna German and Padmini Banerjee (eds.), **Migration, Technology, and Transculturation: a Global Perspective**, *St Charles, MO, USA: Lindenwood University Press, 2011, 288 pp., (ISBN13: 978-0984630745), (paper).*

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German and Banerjee compiled a well-focused volume on promoting transculturation perspective in relation to technology and migration featuring 14 papers from academics from around the globe. It is often very difficult to put together a focused and conceptually neat edited volume and German and Banerjee have managed to do that. Contributors discuss various cases with a view which points out the rise of transculturation concept in understanding the complexity of transnational mobility and movers pursuing lives here and there. Within an interdisciplinary framework, most of the contributions relate to the United States, however, there are useful notes on the European case too. The editors were mainly concerned about the ways in which technology have impacted on migration by enabling constant and easy contact between the host and home countries.

In the opening chapter of the first part, Buzzi and Megele explore the role of digital practices in relation to identity and migration and reformulating the question of in-between state of being. Then Lijtmaer takes on the nostalgia and mourning and how migrants use technology to reconnect with their lost past. Following paper uses Russian speaking community in examining what she calls virtual diaspora via internet, "a sphere of communication with compatriots". Cordini presents her study on identity construction among second generation immigrant children in a secondary school in Milan. Accordingly, second generation copes with the issues of identity back and forth between the host and origin countries with the help of internet which bridges the "migrant" and the natives more easily than the real life experiences.

The Second part of the book is all about these bridges build through technology. Chinese in Milan is the subject of Manzo's ethnography. She focuses on the represen-

tation of social resources via internet in the hybridity of Chinatown in Milan. The role of internet and virtual space as an agent of social control is the focus of Roy's study in Giridih, India. She shows how closely knit social control from Giridith is imposed upon the migrants thousands of miles away with the help of technology. Pereira conducted his study using archives and tracing down descendants of people found in genealogies. A challenging solution to study a very small diaspora group spread over four countries. He concludes with a note arguing Goan heritage or Goan origin makes more sense than calling these people "Goan Diaspora". Anderson and Harris completes this part with their study on the role of internet in connecting Black Americans in support for the Barack Obama campaign with specific reference to Black Atlantic group.

The third section includes analyses of a wide array of cases from around the world with a focus on business and professional experiences. Multidisciplinary mix presented in this edited volume is perhaps the value added brought about with this book.

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Reza Hasmath, **The Ethnic Penalty: Immigration, Education and the Labour Market**, Burlington, VT and Surrey, UK: Ashgate (2012) 130pp. (ISBN 978-1-4094-0211-4).

With some 190 million people worldwide living in a country other than that in which they were born, it is rare to find a developed nation without at least one visible ethnic minority population. Such groups have become more and more common over the past few decades in immigrant-receptive societies. A complex mesh of factors explain this trend, including greater globalisation, the spread of new information technologies, lower transportation costs and favourable immigration policies in host countries, as well as economic and social upheaval in origin countries. Generally, however, among the many push and pull factors, one of the major incentives for people to leave their home country in search of work in another has been the desire to find secure and well-paid employment, and thus ensure a higher standard of living than in the country of origin.

Immigration has played an important role in demographic change throughout Canada's history. Since the end of World War Two, two waves of immigration policy have occurred. The first, from 1945 until late in the 1960's, was dominated by an influx of "ethnics", largely of southern European origin. This was followed, due to a change of policy, by a second wave of immigrants, markedly more international in origin. This resulted in the influx of large numbers of "visible ethnic minorities", especially in the major cities. Unlike the predominantly poorly educated first-wave immigrants, those that came to Canada after the 1960's were more formally educated and had experience of skilled work.

Today, Toronto's ratio of immigrants and visible ethnic minorities - almost 40% of its 2.6 million inhabitants - is higher than in any other metropolitan area in Canada, and contains a large proportion of immigrants from Asia, especially South Asia, and those identifying as Black. These groups of immigrants have achieved convergence in educational achievements with the more established groups. Given the desire of both

local and federal bodies to ensure fairness of opportunity and to celebrate diversity, it could be expected that members of these visible ethnic minority groups should easily integrate fully within the community. However the crux of Hasmath's study, involving 59 interviews with members of ethnic minorities in York, East York and Toronto, together with statistical analysis and participant observation, is that "the narrative derived from interviews suggests an uneasiness to boldly claim this is the most convincing conclusion at this juncture" (p.47).

Hasmath's data reveal "a discord in the ability of ethnic minorities to convert their educational attainment into occupational outcomes relative to the dominant, European groups" (p. 69). He argues that a penalty has hindered members of ethnic minorities from occupational success during the job search, hiring and promotion process. Rather than overt discrimination, a complex mix of explanatory factors such as an individual's social network, a firm's working culture, and a community's social trust combine to bring about this apparent penalty. In the latter part of the book, Hasmath goes on to make suggestions for improving the integration, education delivery, and labour market outcomes of visible ethnic minorities, both in Canada and further afield.

This study makes a valuable contribution to a concept which has received only relatively recent attention, and that mainly of an academic, rather than practical nature. If the efforts of Toronto to become a truly cosmopolitan city are to be realised, the issue of why equity in educational achievements on the part of those from visible ethnic minorities fails to become equity in the labour market needs to be addressed. Hasmath takes us on an important first step towards that goal.