

Introduction

Contemporary Migration Trends and Flows on the Territory of Southeast Europe

DOI 10.17234/9789531756525.14

This edited volume is the result of the conference “Contemporary Migration Trends and Flows on the Territory of Southeast Europe”, held in November 2016 and organized by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb and the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies in Zagreb. The conference gathered participants from different European countries, reaching Zagreb from Sofia, Ljubljana, Marseille, Belgrade, Malmö, Ankara, and other cities. Migration scholars with backgrounds in ethnology and cultural anthropology, sociology, geography, history, political science, demography, legal studies etc., offered various perspectives on migration processes in Europe today. One of the aims of the conference was to bring together experts who deal with migration, mobility, asylum, refugee, citizenship, and integration issues in the region, from different countries and with diverse research experience, in order to share, exchange, comment, discuss and, above all, familiarise themselves with each other’s works and ideas, and to connect and establish networks for future collaboration.

Diverse and multifaceted migration patterns and trends, including emigration, transit, immigration, and circulation of persons constituted the key topics we discussed at the conference and which are analysed in this volume. Several presentations focused on the increased arrival and transit of refugees and other forced migrants through the Balkan corridor in 2015/2016.

Through presentations and discussions, conference participants elaborated on the (im)mutability of migration push and pull factors, on multi-causes of migration, diverse migrant networks, as well as on the roles of the political, economic and legislative context of migration. Some of the lines of the analysis were: (re)examination of migration typologies (e.g. economic, family, permanent, legal, irregular, voluntary, forced, virtual migration, return migration, brain drain, transmigrants, expatriates...); views on the duration of migration processes (circular, temporary, seasonal, long-term, permanent); changes in the socio-demographic structure of migrants (e.g. the feminisation of migration, youth migrants); changes in the discourse and narratives related to migration (e.g. the politicisation, securitisation and criminalisation of migration), etc. Moreover, some of the papers tackled the impact of migration processes on source, transit and destination areas. Several papers focused on the issue of integration of (im)migrants, on integration policies and on different constraints migrants encounter. The conference offered an opportunity for

comparisons of experiences from different countries: it shed light on some of the similarities between countries, as well as on some of the national specificities.

As a follow-up to the conference, this edited volume tackles different topics concerning old/new conceptual, methodological and theoretical dilemmas in migration studies. The knowledge and experience of scholars from various disciplines is shared within the pages of this volume: papers written by ethnologists and cultural anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, and others are brought together in order to gain a better understanding of the social, economic, political, cultural and other processes connected with migration in modern European societies. While some of the papers focus on migration processes, others dwell on post-migration phenomena and migrants' livelihoods in their places of immigration. Nineteen authors participated in writing thirteen papers, divided in four interrelated sections.

The first section, titled "Statistics, Patterns and Policies", deals with some of the terms and methodological tools used in migration policies, migration-related data and statistics. The paper titled "Improving the Comparability of International Migration Statistics: The Case of South-East Europe", written by Sanja Cukut Krilić, Duška Knežević Hočevar and Simona Zavratnik, discusses gaps in the categorisation and classification of migrants. The authors argue for a careful approach to the systematic recording of migration, one that would balance between the ethical issues connected with people's registration on one hand and the need for data which would serve as a basis for policies and actions on the other. In the paper "The Problem and Controversy of 'Generations': 'Migration Experience' as an Analytical Framework" Damir Josipović focuses on the issue of "generation", which is found to be analytically insufficient and having a stigmatizing and discrimination effect. Instead, the author advocates the use of a "migration experience" framework. In her paper "Use of Migration Terms in Public Discourse: Example of Serbia in the Last Hundred Years" Miroslava Lukić Krstanović analyses the normative production of terms and categories, which are strongly embedded in historical processes of migration and state policies connected to them. The author also sheds light on the scientific institutionalisation of migration issues and on the construction of scientific paradigms.

The four papers in the section titled "Narratives and Experiences" deal with different realities and life-narratives of persons with migration experiences or migration aspirations. In her paper "A Transnational Triangle: Representations of the EU and Serbia in the Narratives of Bosnian Serbs Living in Graz", Marija Brujić writes about ambivalent and liminal positions in regards to the ethnic and cultural identities of Bosnian Serbs in Austria. She analyses their cultural representations of the EU and of the EU integration of Serbia as a transnational way of belonging in Serbia. Ivaylo Markov's paper "Narratives about Migratory Experiences and Homeland among the Albanians from the Republic of Macedonia" examines narra-

tives among Albanian labour migrants from the Republic of Macedonia, their attitudes toward their place of origin and connections to it, and their perceptions and senses of home and belonging. In the paper titled “Should I Stay or Should I Go?’: Migration Patterns of Macedonia’s Young People” Mina Hristova discusses the issue of Macedonian youth obtaining Bulgarian passports. The author shows how a passport could be seen as an identity symbol, but also as a pragmatic tool for achieving a chance for a better life. In her paper “Cross-Border Marriages between Residents of South Kosovo and Western Europe: Discourses, Aspirations and Realities”, Carolin Leutloff-Grandits writes about cross-border marriage migration. The author analyses discourses and legal measures against marriage migration, women’s and men’s aspirations to marry abroad, gender roles and family relations, as well as conflicts, possibilities and benefits that cross-border marriage might bring.

The third section, “Refugees and Asylum: Regimes, Borders and Responses”, focuses on the transit movements of refugees and forced migrants through the Balkan corridor and over the Balkan route, and on the bureaucratic impediments to access, reception and integration prospects for the refugee population. The paper titled “In the Shadow of the Transit Spectacle”, written by Marijana Hameršak and Iva Pleše, deals with the detention and transit camps in the Croatian part of the Balkan corridor, and with the border control system. Along with the roles of the camps in the social production of migrants’ statuses, and the underlying security and humanitarian practices, the authors also recognise forms of resistance to and subversion of migration control regimes. In their paper “Migrants/Refugees in Slovene Healthcare: Many Open Questions and Some Possible Answers”, Uršula Lipovec Čebren and Sara Pistotnik analyse the legal and administrative barriers migrants encounter while attempting to access the healthcare system in Slovenia. The authors also discuss some of the proposals that were made to overcome those obstacles. In her paper “‘Managing’ the Polyphony: The Discourse of Fraud and Epistocracy in the Context of Migration”, Marta Stojić Mitrović writes about the struggles of different social and political groups to establish authority over narrations related to contemporary migration processes toward the European Union. She deals with questions of credibility and disqualification of certain voices as a manifestation of systemic violence towards disempowered groups.

The final section is titled “Mobility, Post-Migration and Integration”. It gathers papers dealing with diverse topics related to mobility and post-migration phenomena such as integration, as well as with migrants’ agency and the role of religiosity. The paper written by Jasna Čapo, “Economic Activities and Agency of ‘Love-Driven’ International Migrants in the City of Zagreb”, deals with well educated, highly skilled immigrants in the Croatian capital, who have been driven to the city by love/partnership. The analyses focuses on the systemic constraints on migrants’ agency and entrepreneurship. In the paper titled “Local Religiosity in the Context

of Migration: The Cases of the Greek Catholics from Žumberak in Croatia and the Orthodox Christian Serbs in Eastern Serbia”, Petko Hristov and Violeta Periklijeva present two cases of transnational and translocal processes. The authors focus on local religiosity in the context of labour mobility, and the roles it may play in the construction of migrants’ identity and in relations to the places/areas of their origin. In their paper “Interaction as a Key Connective Tissue of Refugee Integration in Croatian Society”, Rahela Jurković and Marijeta Rajković Iveta focus on experiences of integration of persons who received international protection in the Republic of Croatia. They emphasise the importance of the interactive dimension of integration, i.e. the significance of social relationships that these persons establish with the members of the receiving country and local community.

Some of the papers tackle the (post)transitional legacy and continuity of the migration, population, citizenship, asylum and/or integration policies of the states in this region. Others focus more on the historical and contemporary aspects of migration, which is understood as the consequence of economic decline, family reuniting motives or a necessity framed or de-constructed as “the crisis”. Aspects of post-migration phenomena reveal the complexity of integration in an era of the growing heterogeneity of immigrants. By discussing family and gender construction within national and transnational families and social spaces, some authors dwell on family, expat and other migrant networks, transborder activities, lifestyles and everyday experiences. Thus, these texts shed light on the motivations, conditions and outcomes of migration acts, depicting and emphasising migrants’ agency: their motivation, perception of personal well-being, decisions, feelings, plans and actions.

Our hope is that the articles published in this volume will contribute to the better understanding of recent migration movements within and in-between Southeast Europe territories, and towards other European as well as other transcontinental areas. The collection has brought together authors who deal with macro, mezzo and micro perspectives on migration and analyse contemporary pre-migration, migration and post-migration processes. We believe that a comparative perspective – detecting similarities between countries and also indicating their specificities – can help us achieve a better understanding of migration trends and patterns. Moreover, discussing and transgressing theoretical, epistemological and methodological boundaries within migration, refugee and transnationalism studies can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of migration processes.

The discussions we engaged in during and after the conference demonstrated the great complexity of contemporary migration trends, modes and directions. Every day, we witness how migration processes impact and are influenced by the broader context: demographic trends, socio-economic inequalities, developmental perspectives, etc. At the same time, political, public, media and expert discourses on migration-related topics tell us much about socio-political positions and power

relations among different international and local stakeholders. After the events in 2015/2016, many of migrants out of necessity are still stuck on the borders along the Balkan route, and in need of assistance, protection and a chance for long term stay and integration.

We hope this edited volume will contribute to the better understanding of the social, cultural, economic, political and other challenges and potentials which migrations bring to modern European societies. Hopefully, it will also encourage further academic dialogues and debates. We wish to express our deep gratitude to all of the participants in the conference, as well as to our co-workers and colleagues who helped in organizing the conference and in making the publication of this volume possible.

Marijeta Rajković Iveta, Petra Kelemen and Drago Župarić-Iljić