

Nadler, R., Kovács, Z., Glorius, B. and Lang, T. (eds.): *Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe: Mobility Against the Stream*. London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 385 p.

The European Union (EU) enlargement towards East Central European countries guaranteed free movement of people within member states. Perceptions about the new migration policies and the fear of invasion of cheap manual labour from Accession eight (A8) countries such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia created the archetypal figure of the 'Polish plumber'. This shows the excessive politicisation and instrumentalisation of migration issues in Western Europe. Considering the recent migration crisis, the instrumentalisation of migration is not unfamiliar in East Central Europe either. Significant income disparities between the Western and Eastern parts of Europe, better working conditions, skills development such as mastering foreign languages were among the main pull factors for people in post-socialist countries to work abroad. Since the EU enlargement in 2004, and especially during the years of the financial and economic crisis, a significant number of young and skilled has tried to pursue fortune and happiness in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, and a few years later in Germany and Austria. Even traditionally 'sedentarist' and

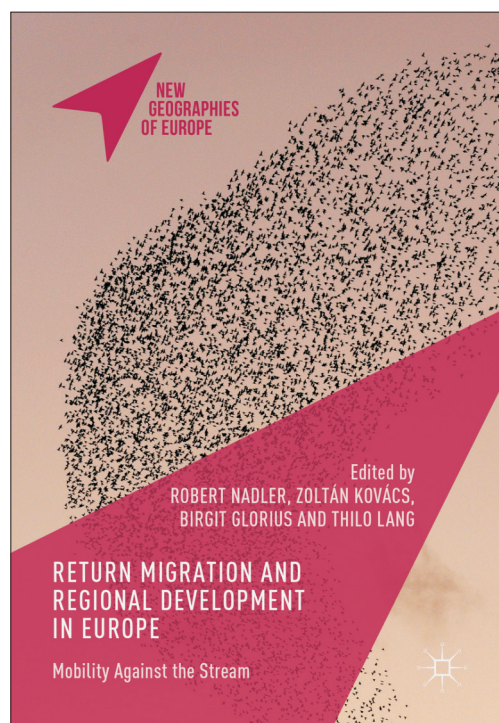
'a-mobile' populations, like Hungarians, opted for mobility along with the more mobile East Central European peoples, like Polish, Slovaks or Romanians (ILLÉS, S. and KINCSES, Á. 2012).

It is widely accepted that economic reasons influence migration processes, but these are far to be the only ones. The social, cultural and political context in countries of origin affects the decision to mobility. Moreover, emotional processes as well as personal traits and attitude also shape human mobility and vice versa as much in the case of lifestyle migration (O'REILLY, K. 2007) as in the case of labour migration (WRIGHT, K. 2011). During the past decade both the academia and media paid much attention to the receiving countries and on issues like immigration, integration processes and acculturation. Yet, although neglected as a top-research topic, return is also a fundamental element of East Central European migration schemes. Thus, 'Return migration and regional development in Europe' engages a very pertinent topic.

This recent edited volume belongs to the Springer 'New Geographies of Europe' series, the aim of which is to welcome contributions "where the focus is upon novel spatial phenomena, path-dependent processes of socio-economic change or policy responses at various levels throughout Europe". This volume responds to all the aforementioned goals. The book, edited by Robert NADLER, Zoltán KOVÁCS, Birgit GLORIUS and Thilo LANG, came out of a joint research project entitled 'Re-Turn' funded by the European Regional Development Fund, and of a workshop organised in 2013 in Budapest on the topic of return migration and regional development.

The collection of studies provides an extensive review of the current state of return migration and reintegration of citizens in their country of origin, with a special focus on policy approaches that should ease return migration. All subjects are of key importance in East Central European countries. The focus of the volume is to "enrich the debate on the changing migration patterns in Europe based on up-to-date theoretical and empirical work" and the book's mission is to create an "anthology of state-of-art research on return migration in Europe" (p. 3). The volume does not fail to deliver on its aims. It is divided into four main parts, although these parts are not equally balanced since part one, two and three contain four and five chapters each, while part four lists only two.

A general overview of the 'mobility against the stream' is presented in the stimulating introductory session written by the editors. The scarcity of data is well-known in migration studies, but it is particularly evident in the case of return migration. Still, it is assumed that return migration interests more than 3.4



million people within the EU, as a map on the main flows of European migration indicates (p. 7). The volume, in fact, provides different methodological and data gathering approaches that could be applied in different scenarios. Furthermore, in the introduction, neoclassical theory and structuralist approaches, widely used in migratory studies, are described with the specific aim to highlight the freshness and dynamism of social network theories and transnational approaches applied throughout this volume. The innovation of such theories and approaches is the focus on social and cultural processes and motives of (return) migration that give a much human-centred rather than purely economic vision of the phenomena (see the essays by KING and KILINÇ; NÍ CHEARBHAILL; and VAN BLANCKENBURG). Following these parts, the nexus between return migration and regional development is investigated, demystifying the assumption that return migrants can easily, quickly and successfully be (re)integrated in their home society. The authors present evidence for that, in general, irregular working conditions and unemployment affect return migrants.

Part I focuses on the conceptual approaches towards return migration in Europe, and features four essays. In Chapter 2 Ludger PRIES from Ruhr University Bochum widely explores multiple and multidirectional mobility patterns from a historical and sociological point of view. His starting point is the German guest-worker programme in the 1970s. Circular migration and transnational mobility are widespread phenomena not only in Germany, but in East Central Europe as well. Persons on the move identify themselves less and less as immigrants or returnees, keeping lively the possibility to change their spatial nexus according to their changing needs. The theoretical and methodological challenges to investigate circular migration are also addressed in PRIES's work, in which current migration policies are discussed.

Katrin KLEIN-HITPASS's contribution in Chapter 3 on return migrants puts skilled labour force in the centre. She analyses the processes that make return migrants knowledge brokers and innovators. In her case study on Poland, KLEIN-HITPASS compares Polish mobility before and after the EU accession. She evidences that in the 1990s those who emigrated were well-trained and skilled and, upon return, significantly contributed to economic development in their homeland through their improved technological, managerial or communication skills. Although this trend seems to have changed after the EU enlargement, the mass of younger and less educated Poles mainly coming from rural areas can hardly be considered as that of knowledge-brokers.

From the same geographical area, Poland, is Izabela GRABOWSKA's inspirational work on how the interplay of opportunity structure and agency influences life course occupational trajectories. GRABOWSKA from the University of Warsaw conducted an exten-

sive qualitative research based on structured and biographical interviews in Warsaw and in the small town of Nysa. The research aim was to construct a typology of the meanings of migration to one's career development applying the theory on agency approach. Her findings show that the meaning of migration, such as fixative, incident, exploration or project in her classification, always depends on individual personality. She argues that in our current age people, especially the young, are "pushed into global biographies" (p. 103), which means that living in one place during the whole lifetime is extremely hard because occupational trajectories often require mobility. She claims for a new perspective on migration. In the case of transnational migrants it makes less sense to speak about return migration, because even when they return home they are considered global citizens ready to embark on the next opportunity in a foreign country. I would strongly suggest her essay to the young and graduated who aim to realise their dreams abroad since it helps to cope with emerging challenges.

In Chapter 5, Jelena PREDOJEVIC-DESPIC, Tanja PAVLOV, Svetlana MILUTINOVIC and Brikena BALLI analyse the returning and transnational business practices in Albania and Serbia through a pilot study, contributing to the debate on the nexus between returning migrants and regional development. Investigating micro- and small-sized enterprises, the authors evidence that several types of networks were established between the origin and destination countries.

Part II deals with research methods and implementations and results. This part highlights the difficulties in data gathering and introduces possible data sources for return migration studies, such as cross-country surveys as a quantitative method (DANZER and DIETZ), new approaches to analyse existing data sets (NADLER), in-depth interviews (KING and KILINÇ) and interdisciplinary research (NÍ CHEARBHAILL). These methods are in part already applied in several research designs in East Central European countries (e.g. LAKATOS, J. 2015 in Hungary), but could be further redefined.

In Chapter 6, Alexander M. DANZER and Barbara DIETZ with a cross-country survey across five EU partnership countries investigate the assistance of migration agencies and pre-migration skill development in the case of 2,000 temporary and return migrants. In this part, Robert NADLER's essay on measuring return migration in Eastern Germany can be considered as the most innovative from the methodological point of view. His data source was the German Employment History Data based on employers' social security notifications sent to the administrative register between 2001 and 2010. In this way, Nadler managed to measure not only the employability of domestic migrants but spatial mobility between Western and Eastern Germany as well.

The other chapters in this part fail to experiment new research methods except Chapter 8. KING and

KILIŇC's study explores the most numerous foreign population in Germany, the Turks. Their analysis focuses on second generation Turkish-German men and women using semi-structured life-history narratives. Employing this method, rich data on gendered narratives could be scrutinised. It is interesting to note that self-realisation and belonging were among the main challenges faced by Turkish-German as much as by Irish individuals in the study by Nİ CHEARBHAILL who explored return migrants' search for linguistic and cultural identity.

Part III is entitled 'New regional perspectives and research questions on return migration in Europe'. Here again readers find the topic of circular migration but the country under scrutiny is Latvia. The chapter is valuable for the methods applied since KRISJANE, APSITE-BERINA and BERZINS use an online survey distributed among 2,565 Latvian nationals in five different countries. Their aim was to explore migrants' return intentions and evidence of the decisive role of labour market constraints in the homeland. The online survey method was employed by BÜRGİN and ERZE-BÜRGİN as well to study the German-trained Turkish workforce (Chapter 13).

In Chapter 11, Birgit GLORIUS, one of the co-editors of the volume from the Institute of European Studies in Chemnitz studied the mobility decision processes of Erasmus students in Halle, Germany. Her findings show that the institutional framework plays a significant role in decision making along with rationality, subjectivity and emotionality. Foreign students establish social capital in the destination country that can hardly be capitalised in their home country. It is widely accepted that having constructed a good international network and social capital is valuable, but the missing network in the home country limits the possibilities to career development. This is a fact that all students from East Central Europe who aim to study abroad should bear in mind.

Chapter 12 by VAN BLANCKENBURG is particularly interesting for covering the importance of memory and cultural identity in successful entrepreneurs' motivations to return to East Germany. This neglected topic is highly relevant in post-socialist countries, still, our current knowledge on this phenomenon is extremely limited. Childhood memories, perceptions, beliefs, and strong moral obligation nurtured the wish to return to the antecedents' territory and this provides a wider spectrum of approaches and methods to apply to migration studies.

In Chapter 14, Caroline HORNSTEIN TOMIĆ and Sarah SCHOLL-SCHNEIDER explore the experiences of return migrants in Croatia and Czech Republic. Their research gives voice to the bitter awareness often experienced by return migrants that even if they try hard to be 'agents of change' and 'knowledge-brokers' in their home society, the obstacles are numerous and the chances to succeed are little. Still,

return migrants, as showed by HORNSTEIN TOMIĆ and SCHOLL-SCHNEIDER, are more tolerant and more democratic than their fellow compatriots. Having innovative, new or just simply different ideas, return migrants add their own puzzle-piece to post-socialist countries 'fluid-democracies' (BAUMAN, Z. 2000).

Part IV gathers two essays. The first one critically analyses several European national policies aimed at stimulating return migration (BOROS and HEGEDŰS), while the conclusive essay signed by the editors is a sum-up of the analysed topics and issues with clear future research and policy implications. In Chapter 15 Lajos BOROS and Gábor HEGEDŰS from the University of Szeged scrutinises 41 international, national and sub-national policy documents focusing on retention, re-employment or re-attraction of return citizens. For a wider comparison, the authors also examined successful remigration policy practices and brain gain strategies in China, Taiwan, India, South Africa and Ghana. Their findings show that although national policies vary greatly, European countries, until now, have not been able to leverage on return migrants. It seems to be clear that a co-operation between sending and host countries (e.g. between Italy and Romania, the UK and Poland) is essential not only to convince but also to help migrants to return to their country of origin.

It is worth noting that although return migration and retention are issues of current political debate offering fertile ground for propaganda, "efficient return initiatives and competent institutional background with a decentralised decision-making system" (p. 353) fail to be established. This again shows a huge discrepancy between social and economic trends and political slogans. As a common burden, all East Central European countries have to face brain drain. The young and skilled, but as this volume evidences the not so young and lower-skilled as well, cannot be hindered anymore to try to live according to Western European standards. Countries like Poland, Hungary, Slovakia or Romania should work not only on attractive return migration policies, but on establishing an attractive social, cultural and political environment, too.

The different essays of this volume show how complex the phenomenon of return migration is and how inefficient the current return policies are. Having read this book, one might ask oneself that if it is so challenging to ease return migration within EU countries and to offer policy tools to integrate knowledge brokers, transnational entrepreneurs and graduate students, how will the EU cope with mass migration from war-torn and socially, economically and politically instable countries?

From the geographical point of view the volume is well-balanced, although slightly more emphasis is given to Germany and Turkey. The volume presents empirical research not only from old and new EU member states, but also provides essays on Albania,

Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova, offering a complex vision on return migration in Europe. In my view, the volume could have been more complete with some essays on (re)migration flows between Southwestern Europe and East Central Europe. For its volume, especially the case of Romanians settled in Spain or in Italy would have been interesting to study. To conclude this review, I think that the strong and meticulous editorship makes the book a solid composition and a goldmine for references. It is a highly recommended source for policy makers, academics, undergraduate and post-graduate students.

ANNA IRIMIÁS

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