

## On international migration: A review essay

### *Handbook on Migration and Social Policy*

edited by Gary P. Freeman and Nikola Mirilovic  
Cheltenham (UK) and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2016  
ISBN 978-1-78347-628-2  
Hardcover \$270, 512 pp.

### *Migration and Social Policy*

edited by Jenny Phillimore  
International Library of Studies on Migration Series No. 19  
Cheltenham (UK) and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2015  
ISBN 978-1-78347-104-1  
Hardcover \$415, 737 pp.

### *Integrating Immigrants in Europe: Research-Policy Dialogues*

edited by Peter Scholten, Han Entzinger, Rinus Penninx, and Stijin Verbeek  
Heidelberg and New York: Springer Open, 2015  
ISBN 978-3-319-16255-3  
Hardcover \$78, 343 pp.

### *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*

edited by Mary C. Waters and Marisa Gerstein Pineau  
Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2015  
ISBN 978-0-309-37398-2  
Softcover \$80, 520 pp.

Anthony C. Masi<sup>1</sup>

International migration continues to reshape our world, sometimes in predictable ways but often with unanticipated consequences. The four books reviewed here provide new information and important insights regarding migration and migrant adjustment. They do so either by dealing with the *policy dimension* of this vast topic (Freeman and Mirilovic; Phillimore) or by delving deeply into the issue of *immigrant integration* (Scholten et al.; Waters and Gerstein Pineau). These editors took four different approaches to their task: (1) a compilation of already published works on the topic (Phillimore); (2) original pieces on topics or countries but following a predetermined framework (Scholten et al.); (3) chapters designed to test theories against available

---

1. Professor of Industrial Relations and Organizational Behaviour, Desautels Faculty of Management and Centre on Population Dynamics, McGill University, 1001 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, QC, H3A 1G5; email: anthony.masi@mcgill.ca.

empirical information (Freeman and Mirilovic); and (4) a comprehensive group-written “state of the art” for a single country (Waters and Gerstein Pineau). Together, the books provide an impressive array of scholarship from a variety of disciplinary perspectives on the links between migration and social policy and on immigrant integration.

## The policy dimension

In *Migration and Social Policy*, Jenny Phillimore brings together 38 previously published journal articles and chapters from other compilations, written between 1989 and 2013. The pagination and formatting from the original source of each of the included works are preserved, along with sequential page numbering for this volume itself. She edited this anthology around four themes: (1) social policies in the new age of migration; (2) the provision of welfare for migrants and its politicization in terms of “deservingness” and “restrictionism”; (3) diversity (and super-diversity), incorporation, and assimilation; and (4) community involvement in the delivery of services to immigrants. In addition, Phillimore introduces the volume, but does not provide a summary or conclusion to the effort. Instead, the final section contains a single article on the “reflexive practitioner” (Atkin and Chattoo) that deals with social service provision for Pakistani immigrants in the UK.

There is virtue in this collection, but the editor’s introduction does not sufficiently explain the logical flow from one chapter or section to the next, making the transitions difficult to follow. The works included are not of uniformly high quality, and the placement of articles/chapters into the various sections is debateable. For example, the article on diversity, multiculturalism, and rethinking the welfare state (Myles and St-Arnaud) is important and clearly worthy of anchoring the section on social policies. However, an empirical piece by on the same topic (Koopman) is in the section on provision of welfare for immigrants; another on migration and welfare (Banting) is included under “politicization”; and a similarly concerned piece on ethnicity, trust, and welfare (Soroka, et al.) is placed in the section on “deservingness”. Finally, the entire section devoted to “migration and the welfare state” contains other complementary contributions. The series editor and/or the publisher’s copy-editor could have made a case for reorganizing the included works in a more coherent manner.

Phillimore’s motivation for bringing these works together is her perception that the core social policy literature, whether theoretical or empirical, has not placed migrants front and centre in its discussions. This is a remarkable assertion, especially considering the Freeman and Mirilovic volume (see below), as well as the articles and chapters in her own book that clearly indicate a flourishing literature on migration and social policy among scholars, policymakers, and practitioners (see chapter 27 by Ager and Strang for a conceptual framework for understanding integration). The total number of works included in this volume, and their individual bibliographies, nonetheless do provide starting points for the exploration of important themes in the study of migration policies.

By contrast, in the *Handbook on Migration and Social Policy* (also published by Elgar), Gary P. Freeman and Nikola Mirilovic have assembled twenty-four original chapters by established and younger researchers from a range of disciplines and perspectives. Among the editors’ stated goals for this volume, two stand out: to provide readers with authoritative summaries of the “state of play” in the study of migration and social policy; and to explore topics from theoretical perspectives that could be tested against empirical data, thus enlightening normative disputes. They have succeeded on both counts.

Freeman and Mirilovic divide their handbook into seven topic areas: (1) new analytical perspectives; (2) the political economy of migration; (3) trade-offs between immigration and social policy; (4) opposition to immigration and free movement in Europe; (5) diversity and the welfare state; (6) migrant integration and social policy; and (7) immigrant rights versus immigration politics. Insofar as the chapters represent research and scholarship explicitly written for inclusion in the volume, the editors were able to insist that authors provide a cross-cutting focus on formal settlement and integration policies for migrants. A common thread in all the chapters is the presence of very readable summaries of the current state of knowledge on the topic at hand. In addition, several chapters also explore state policies that *indirectly* affect migrants and migration.

The focus of the *Handbook* is primarily on immigration analyses in North Americas and Western Europe, but also includes chapters on India and Israel. Among the many other interesting contributions, the following are particularly noteworthy: international migration and trade theory (Peters), foreign direct investment (Leblang), globalization (Lucassen), public opinion (Facchini et al.), labour programs (Ruhs), and the welfare state (Crepaz). One shortcoming of the Freeman and Mirilovic effort is that there is no summary or conclusion by the editors.

The section of the *Handbook* on immigrant integration raises research questions that are taken up, in part, by the next two volumes reviewed below. Further, the chapters on why migrant rights are different than human rights (Money et al.), and on missing skilled immigrants to the USA (Medina), local-level approaches (Ireland), and civic integration in Europe (Joppke and Eule), provide additional links to the next books as well.

## Immigrant integration

*Integrating Immigrants in Europe*, an open-access book with fifteen original scholarly contributions edited by Peter Scholten, Han Entzinger, Rinus Penninx, and Stijin Verbeek, explores how historical roots and contemporary public opinion together influence research on, and policy-making for, migrant integration in Europe. The editors have brought together interdisciplinary theoretical contributions and empirical studies at both the European Union and individual country levels. In addition, they have produced not only an introductory chapter that provides the conceptual framework and key questions to be explored by the empirical research reported in the core of the volume, but they also wrote a sure to be much-appreciated concluding chapter that offers insightful comparisons across the various contributions.

It is important to emphasize that the principal concern of this book is not the decision to migrate or even migration itself. Rather, the editors have brought the contributors together to deepen our understanding of migrant integration. In the introduction, the editors outline a three-pronged conceptual model of the interface between research and policy: knowledge paradigms produced by research institutions, instrumental knowledge utilization developed by policymakers, and dialogue structures based on institutional relations or informal ad hoc contacts that link them (p. 4). The volume is divided into two substantive sections—conceptual-oriented contributions on the forms and functions of research-policy dialogues (including a piece by Singleton on the marginality of civil society in European Union migration policy), and case studies of how the research policy dialogue has played out over the last decade or so (in Austria, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Poland, Denmark, and the EU itself).

As is the case for the above-discussed *Handbook*, Scholten et al. gave their authors guidelines for conceptual and empirical studies. Even though a variety of perspectives are employed by the different researchers, overall this monograph is logically structured, rigorously argued, and coherent. In both sections of the book, we see how the dialogue between research and policy is regulated (advisory bodies, research agencies, and ad-hoc committees) and how policymaking and the development of migrant integration research itself are affected. The analytical country-level and local-area case studies reveal that profound changes in these structures can occur even over relatively brief time periods.

On a conceptual level, the chapter on “cultures of knowledge” that compares the UK to Germany (Boswell) and the one on “migration statistics” across the EU (Kraler et al.) illustrate nicely the tension between developing knowledge about migrant integration and having the capacity to use it efficiently in policy development and/or implementation. Reading the chapters, one can understand why the countries of the EU do not have consistent measurement instruments, and that this is likely to persist into the future—as policymakers in different EU countries do not agree on how to use an evidence-based approach to solve migrant integration problems. In contrast, the chapters on French “assimilationism” versus Dutch “multiculturalism” (Bertossi et al.) and the comparison of the work of special commissions in the Netherlands and Germany (Schneider and Scholten) highlight some potential shortcomings of national models. Interestingly, these contributions may challenge the idea that the conceptual model proposed by the editors can be effectively implemented in informing migrant integration policies in the European Union.

An important insight from the study of cities and municipalities (Penninx) is that the nexus between research and policy at the local level is tighter when national policy directions are clear and transparent. Under those circumstances, the work of integrating migrants into cities is more likely to be research-informed. In addition, the development of common basic principles (Pratt) should increase knowledge utilization, but the lack of civil society groups (Singelton) on policy design and implementation has been and remains a significant barrier to doing so.

The EU has attempted to provide an umbrella of policies and pronouncements on producing and utilizing knowledge. Clearly, however, the actual contribution of research to policymaking varies enormously across the seven countries presented for detailed analysis. While the conceptual framework for the country studies was imposed by the editors, each author was free to choose the domains for empirical consideration: Austria, Italy, Germany, UK (naturalization, migrant children in education, accommodation of religious pluralism); Netherlands (Islamic schools, educational segregation, naturalization); Poland (refugee children, policy development); Denmark (burkas, radicalization, ghettoization). The EU chapter points out the lack of a legal basis for it to develop a common paradigm for research policy dialogue on migrant integration.

In their concluding chapter, Scholten et al. emphasize the extent to which research studies about, as well as practical approaches to dealing with, migrant integration have become increasingly ad-hoc as member states respond to political events, specific problems, and shifts in public opinion. Research policy dialogues have allowed the EU and its constituent nations to develop both migrant integration policies and new forms of migrant integration research. Dramatic changes have occurred in the span of only the last 40 or so years in Europe; thus, the more detailed study of the American experience, in a country essentially built on immigration, provides an appropriate contrast.

*The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*, edited by Mary Powers and Marisa Gerstein Pineau and published under the auspices of the US National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, is also open-source and available in PDF format free of charge. To understand the impact on American society of enormous numbers of people both sojourning and settling in the country, the National Academies established a Panel on the Integration of Immigrants into American Society, which produced this volume.<sup>2</sup>

Since its founding, the United States has been defined as and has defined itself (sometimes proudly, sometimes grudgingly) as “a nation of immigrants.” The large number, if not percentage, of foreign-born in its population over multiple generations always places the USA at or near the top of the world’s league table for immigration. Despite some periods of considerable difficulties for immigrants and sporadic attempts by different administrations and legislatures to reduce the flow, the United States in general can be viewed as relatively “successful” in absorbing people from across the globe into its economy, society, and culture. The various chapters of this report provide the balance sheets for the specific domains considered.

The organizing principle for Waters and Gerstein Pineau appears simple—finding compelling evidence to show that the integration of immigrants and their children contributes to America’s economic vitality as well as to the country’s vibrant and ever changing culture—but in fact it is not. The various chapters focus on *how* and *to what extent* these feats are accomplished, and what *consequences* emerge from the effort required by both the host society and the immigrants themselves. The opportunities for immigrants and their children to better themselves and to be fully incorporated into society are what transform them into Americans.

Three concerns motivated the National Academies to commission this volume: (1) the need for a contemporary summary of existing knowledge on immigrant integration into American society; (2) an understanding of the extent to which this knowledge is utilised by policymakers in considering alternative approaches; and (3) the development of a “gap analysis” of current knowledge and the availability of data on immigration and migrant integration that could fill the lacunae.

Insofar as this study deals with a single country, it has the advantage of being able to provide in-depth analyses of each of the substantive areas considered. In addition to almost a score of formal conclusions about

---

2. In parallel, the Panel on the Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration developed a companion volume, *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*, edited by Francine Blau and Christopher Mackie (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2017, 642 pp; not reviewed here).

the current state of knowledge regarding immigrant integration in the United States, the volume contains nine concrete recommendations for improving the quantity and quality of data on immigration and migrant integration for that country.

Waters and Gerstein Pineau introduce the work of the Panel by way of an executive summary of the ten substantive chapters that follow: (1) an introduction dealing with the demography of immigrants and the attitudes of Americans about them; (2) the legal and institutional context for immigrant integration, followed by a series of chapters on different dimensions of immigration; (3) legal status; (4) politics and civil society; (5) spatial distribution; (6) socio-economic differences; (7) socio-cultural aspects; (8) family issues; (9) health status and access to care; and (10) a call to action for better data relative to immigrants and their integration. Chapters 2 through 9 contain detailed conclusions regarding research findings on the immigrant integration in the domain under consideration, while chapter 10 specifies the well-reasoned set of recommendations on data collections needed to advance knowledge on migrant integration in the USA.

At the end of each chapter, the Panel's findings are clearly and concisely highlighted thanks to careful editing (and writing) by Waters and Gerstein Pineau. Here are some of the more important among the eighteen conclusions: the institutional context for various categories of migrants in the USA is complex and the laws, policies, and increasingly frequent Presidential orders are sometimes contradictory; US-born children of migrants face problems depending on the legal status of their parents; there is no simple explanation for why naturalization rates are low; racial segregation of immigrants persists; intergenerational differentials in schooling, employment, occupational status, and earnings differentials between immigrants and native-born Americans narrow considerably over time; English language acquisition is relatively fast; religious organizations help migrants to integrate; immigrants and immigration are associated *inversely* with crime; intermarriage rates increase considerably across generations and in general migrants have more stable family lives than native-born Americans; the "healthy migrant" effect disappears with age and access to health care needs improvements beyond the Affordable Care Act (a truly timely issue).

Data recommendations include adding questions various surveys on place of birth of parents, ascertaining legal status directly at entry and at present, developing new ways to discover the conditions for undocumented immigrants and their children, broader use and availability of administrative records and small-area census data for research, oversampling the foreign-born, and the addition of "legal status" and "time in the USA" to health surveys.

Some demographers might be disappointed that these works (except for chapters 1 and 10 in Waters and Gerstein Pineau, and chapter 3 by Kraler et al. in Scholten et al.) are not filled with the latest empirical data on the stocks and flows of international migration, or that they do not contain any new methodological approaches (except appeals for more and higher-quality data). The four books do, however, provide useful summaries of what we presently know about the phenomena—theoretically, empirically, comparatively, and in-depth. In its own way, each book presents powerful insights into the ways in which future research international migration could be more profitably designed and how social policies might be better devised to accomplish immigrant integration with less pain. The editors, no less than the authors of the individual chapters, consistently demonstrate non-trivial ways of linking knowledge to action, research to policy.

Notwithstanding the over 2,000 pages of combined text contained in these four books, there is virtually no overlap in actual content and a nice complementarity of research themes and topics, very few contradictory perspectives, and little inconsistent information; moreover, each volume contains exhaustive and useful bibliographies on the topics covered. The larger reference tomes on migration and social policy belong in institutional library for research purposes and graduate seminars. The works on immigrant integration belong on the shelf of subject matter experts and, as open-source materials, on the syllabi of advanced undergraduate and graduate courses on those topics.