

Book Review of de Haas, Hein, Castles, Stephen and Miller, Mark J. 2020. *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York and London: Guilford Press. Sixth Edition. 443 pp



NJMR NORDIC JOURNAL OF
MIGRATION RESEARCH

BOOK REVIEW

NORA REPO-SAEED

HUP HELSINKI
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

ABSTRACT

de Haas, Hein, Castles, Stephen and Miller, Mark J. 2020. *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York & London: Guilford Press. Sixth Edition. 443 pp.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Nora Repo-Saeed

Project Planner (ADRA
Finland Foundation),
Social Work Assistant
(Autismisäätiö sr), FI

adra.2020@gmail.com

KEYWORDS:

History of migration;
Migration; Migration
policies

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Repo-Saeed, N. 2022. Book Review of de Haas, Hein, Castles, Stephen and Miller, Mark J. 2020. *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York and London: Guilford Press. Sixth Edition. 443 pp. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 12(4), pp. 485–488. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.567>

The authors of the sixth edition of *The Age of Migration*, Hein de Haas, Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, consider the new edition of the leading text of migration studies in its revised and updated form an essentially new book, in which one can find global coverage of migration trends, debates and policies. The new edition also makes use of rich amount of empirical evidence and new global data that was not available earlier (p. xii).

In addition to the introduction and concluding chapters, the book's remaining chapters are organized so that the themes treated can roughly be divided into three: (1) categories, theories and the history of migration as well as ethnic diversity (Chapters 2–5), (2) overviews of migration in all major world regions (Europe, Americas, Asia-Pacific region, Africa and the Middle East) (Chapters 6–9) and (3) politics and policies of migration, and the effects that migration has in destination and origin countries (Chapters 10–14) (p. xxii). The themes are divided slightly differently in the new edition, and the book introduces a few new chapters. Such is Chapter 2 that discusses categories of migration looking into the reasons behind migration and the ways of materializing it. Chapter 4 comprises the same topics as Chapter 3 from the previous edition. New are also chapters pondering on migration governance and the role of state and politics in the migration questions (Chapter 10), and concentrating on migration policy categories (Chapter 11). Chapter 14 offers new perspectives while examining international migration in relation to origin societies.

The authors show the importance of observing the trends in migration in a historical continuum and demonstrated that the destinations of migration have changed significantly over the centuries. Moreover, they argue that the current trend directing migration to Europe will most likely be replaced in the future. 'As [...] changes in the structure of global labour demand have been the dominant driving force of international migration, and this is unlikely to change' (p. 356). The research results indicated also that development aid to poorer states was potentially increasing emigration rather than reducing it, as emigration requires financial means, opportunities to travel and access to information. Only when a sufficient level of living standards is achieved in the society, emigration starts to diminish (pp. 58–59).

I was curious to see how the authors had aimed at a better balance as for the coverage of Western and non-Western regions and the perspectives on migration as a phenomenon in the new edition. As Lucassen, Lucassen and Manning (2010: 5) point out, it would be essential to expand migration research to a more global direction, from the angle that traditionally concentrates on Europe and the Atlantic. In a couple of places, the Eurocentric positioning is more visibly exposed. Such is, for example, the section in which authors claim that social cohesion can be increased through citizen tests (p. xiii). I find it rather difficult to come to such a conclusion from the migrant's point of view as the test probably represents more an obstacle to be passed than a source of social cohesion. Also, when authors ponder on the emotional and psychological taxing that deportation efforts have on the officials taking care of the actual deeds, they seem to forget what the deportation does to the individual who is the target of such measures (p. 260). The approach undermines how devastating, aggressive and violent deportation can be for an individual's psyche, and cause even permanent damage to feelings of security and general trust in societal institutions.

Furthermore, when the authors estimate that the impact of specific 'integration policies' and their repercussions are usually rather small (p. 312), I missed a reference to the general societal atmosphere that the prevailing overall policies can create,

such as structural obstacles for migrants to access education or labour markets. The general atmosphere often affects how laws and regulations are implemented. When the atmosphere or public opinion is against migration, it is easier for the authorities to exercise restrictive and even discriminative policies and practices (e.g., Rice & Mullen 2005: 305; Schierup, Hansen & Castles 2006: 51). As the book points out, migrants and their opportunities in destination societies are defined and restricted by many other factors than those that concern migration only. Migrants being people, all that touches human life involves them too (pp. 248–250).

I welcomed the authors' honesty related to the realities of migrant lives such as 'formal equality rarely leads to equality in practice' (p. 88) and that 'the legal protection provided by international conventions can be deficient when states do not ratify them or do not incorporate the norms into their national law, which is often the case with international measures to protect migrant rights' (p. 90). States also tend not to be enthusiastic about exposing their national sovereignty to supranational controlling bodies when it comes to migration policies (p. 14). Thus, how migrants' rights are respected lacks efficient international monitoring. Furthermore, the existing legislation relevant to migration questions is still relatively young and a lot would need to be done to reach a better level of implementation and equality between people of different origins. *The Age of Migration* reminds us that currently the EU has the most advanced and effective common administration and policies related to migration governance in the whole world (p. 239). Nevertheless, the freedom of movement within the EU framework, a concept closely intertwined with migration governance regulating international migration between states, still remains the most challenging and controversial question for the member states to materialize (p. 241).

The book offers excellent tools for understanding the often conflicting ways of addressing migration. Currently, the main factors having an impact on migration are the selective policies of states and governments, which define who can enter and stay on a sovereign state's territory (pp. 249–251). For example, '[t]here is no automatic relation between democratic governance and liberal migration policies' (p. 257). Instead, liberal migration policies are more connected to more liberal economic systems than some kind of 'characteristic of democratic governance *per se*', authors state (p. 257). The selective policies imply that the less welcome groups are more restricted than those who are 'interesting' from a political point of view (p. 258). Problematic in these measures is that they inevitably are a source of creating hierarchies (pp. 248–250) and when there are hierarchies, there are also questions of power and discrimination involved.

In the new edition, one can find 'The Migration Policy Toolbox' (pp. 271–274), which comprises four different policy areas: border controls, legal entry and stay, integration and exit. The toolbox introduces different measures, 'tools', implemented in government policies as for migration questions. For example, Finland executes border control and legal entry and stay-related measures by giving tasks to other actors than authorities. This reflects directly on the lives of migrants as well as, most likely, has an impact on the general atmosphere and public opinion. Finnish citizens have the chance to taste a bit of the life of other nationalities at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport when they are exposed to the carrier sanctions, which mean airline companies' involvement in the border formalities of the destination country.

Many of the migration statistics and facts, such as the migration volumes in the historical continuum (cf. pp. 4–8), challenges in obtaining citizenships

(cf. pp. 319–320) and diverse measures taken to control the migration (cf. Chapters 10–11 and pp. 271–274), compiled in *The Age of Migration*, are rarely discussed in the media or brought up in the public debates. It seems that it is a high time to render discussion regarding international migration more nuanced, take it to new forums and abandon approaches that concentrate only on old-fashioned perspectives such as push and pull factors. For a multifaceted approach on the complexity of migration as a phenomenon, *The Age of Migration* has plenty to offer. In addition to the role of a remarkable textbook that it already has, the book can be used as an informative overview, qualified resume on particular world regions as well as a stimulating element for more analytical discussion in all kinds of arenas that treat international population movements.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATION

Nora Repo-Saeed

Project Planner (ADRA Finland Foundation), Social Work Assistant (Autismsisäitiö sr), FI

REFERENCES

- Lucassen, J, Lucassen, L and Manning, P.** 2010. Migration History: Multidisciplinary Approaches. In: Lucassen, J, Lucassen, L and Manning, P (eds.), *Migration History in World History. Multidisciplinary Approaches*, 3–35. Leiden: Brill. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004180314.i-287>
- Rice, DR and Mullen, B.** 2005. Cognitive Representations and Exclusion of Immigrants: Why Red-Nosed Reindeer Don't Play Games. In: Abrams, D, Hogg, MA and Marques, JM (eds.), *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion*, 293–315. New York/Hoven: Psychology Press.
- Schierup, C-U, Hansen, P and Castles, S.** 2006. *Migration, Citizenship and the European Welfare State: A European Dilemma*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198280521.001.0001>

Repo-Saeed
Nordic Journal of Migration Research
 DOI: 10.33134/njmr.567

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Repo-Saeed, N. 2022. Book Review of de Haas, Hein, Castles, Stephen and Miller, Mark J. 2020. *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York and London: Guilford Press. Sixth Edition. 443 pp. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 12(4), pp. 485–488. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.567>

Submitted: 26 March 2022

Accepted: 06 April 2022

Published: 07 December 2022

COPYRIGHT:

© 2022 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons NonCommercial-NoDerivatives Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0), which permits unrestricted distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited, the material is not used for commercial purposes and is not altered in any way. See <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

Nordic Journal of Migration Research is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Helsinki University Press.