

— BOOK REVIEWS —

Amelia F. Constant, Klaus F. Zimmerman (eds) (2013). *International Handbook on the Economics of Migration*. Cheltenham UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 573.

Academic publishing, like so much else in life, operates in cycles: edited collections (whether of original or reprinted material) are for a period popular with publishers, who launch (and often do not complete) series – and then they fall out of favour. We are currently in a period where they seem very attractive to many of the major publishers, including some – such as Edward Elgar – for whom they have seemed to dominate their catalogues for substantial periods. The *International Handbook on the Economics of Migration* is a product of one such boom-time.

Evaluating such volumes is rarely straightforward. Often it is difficult to determine the precise intended audience for relatively expensive books, many of which – because of time lags between the initial idea, followed by recruiting authors and getting recalcitrants to deliver, obtaining (in this case at least) expert referees' reports, editing and then printing – seem obsolete by the time they reach the purchaser. Given the pace of publication through other media in many subject areas and students' increasing preference for the shift from 'reading for a degree' to 'googling for a degree,' the rationale for such books is hard to identify. But they keep coming.

In many ways this book is no exception to the general tone of this (mild?) criticism. The editors' introduction presents no *raison d'être* for the book and its contents: indeed, like so many such introductions, it does little more than summarise the contents of the remaining chapters and provides no over-arching structure. The second chapter – *Migration and ethnicity: an introduction* – does little better, after rather bewildering the reader by introducing a second

concept – ethnicity – that is not in the book's title. Migration, or rather those elements of migration with which the book is concerned, is not defined, but it is implicitly clear that the dominant focus of interest is international, and especially international economic, migration. Intra-national migration, let alone intra-city migration, is (albeit never explicitly) largely excluded from consideration, although much of that movement too is economic in its rationale. Indeed – as the editors admit – the book's focus is really on the economic integration of immigrant ethnic minorities, though with some reference to identity, perceptions and attitudes.

The book's chapters are structured into four main sections. The first contains five on *The move* – ranging widely from modelling individual migration decisions through the economics of circular migration, the international migration of health professionals, independent child labour migrants, and human smuggling. The second contains seven on *Performance and the labour market*, and the third a disparate eight on *New lines of research* – including one on *Happiness and migration*. The seven chapters in the final section – *Policy issues* – are similarly wide-ranging. In many ways this range is part of the book's strength and appeal: chapters on, for example, migrants' access to financial capital, their experience of risky occupations, their wages and obesity, their experience of natural disasters, and the economic effects of inter-ethnic marriages are all beyond what one might consider the core issues of migration studies and as such introduce a breadth of perspectives that many comparable volumes lack.

In terms of orientation and content the individual chapters vary considerably. Some are – as expected – reviews of the recent literature and the current state of knowledge. Others are little more than individual research papers, such as that on *Ethnic hiring*. The latter have specialist value, but do they have a place in an (expensive) handbook?

Whether this volume is of value to economists and their students of (international) migration and ethnicity is not possible for a non-economist to judge. For the student of migration and ethnicity from another disciplinary perspective it has considerable value in directing attention to issues and literature that might otherwise be overlooked if they were not brought together in a volume such as this. But whether that is justification for the effort in its creation is doubtful, especially given the price: if I had not been invited to review it I would certainly not have bought it, would probably not have suggested its purchase to my university library – indeed would probably have been unaware of it. There has to be a quicker and cheaper way to keep the scholarly community up-to-date.

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Will Kymlicka, Eva Pfössl (eds) (2014). *Multiculturalism and Minority Rights in the Arab World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 320.

Over the last five years, the Arab world has undergone significant transformations. The Arab Spring, which began in 2011 with the escape of Tunisian president Zine el Abidine Ben Ali to Saudi Arabia, not only led to profound changes in the political sphere in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa (hereafter MENA), but also shook the fundamentals of social divisions and questioned the existing methods of regional management of cultural and religious diversity. At the same time, the Arab revolutions attest to the failure of Arab governments to deal creatively with the problems of societal pluralism, including issues of minorities. As a consequence, many previously ignored or taboo political and social issues were brought up and publicly debated. The recently published book *Multiculturalism and Minority Rights in the Arab World*, edited by Will Kymlicka and Eva Pfössl, is very useful at a time when the international community is closely observing frequently turbulent transformations of the states and societies in the MENA

region. In some sense it follows Kymlicka's efforts to assess how Western ideas on the management of ethnic/religious diversity influence and relate to other social and political contexts.¹ However, it also goes further, by aiming to explore how 'identity politics' functions and how minority rights are understood and debated in the region.

Some of the key questions the editors and contributors address in the book are the ones which touch upon the main concepts used in the region to describe issues of ethnic diversity, and models or historic precedents invoked as examples of success or failure. They also ask what hopes or fears drive Arab societies' response to minority claims and what criteria are used to distinguish fair from unfair accommodations, or progressive from regressive claims, or deserving from undeserving minorities. The reviewed volume aims not to catalogue the various laws and policies that have been adopted in relation to minorities in different Arab countries, but rather to provide in-depth assessment of the cultural frameworks and normative assumptions that shape how state–minority relations are debated, and to identify which options are thereby opened up or foreclosed. It does not fully achieve this ambitious goal, among other reasons due to the complexity of the problems at stake, lack of comparative conclusions and wider implications, especially in the light of transformations instigated by the Arab Spring.

Similarly to earlier assessments of multicultural arrangements in other parts of the world co-edited by Kymlicka, the book starts with an introductory chapter that not only clearly sets out the main goals of the publication but also points to the key issues and problems in the theoretical and empirical studies of ethno-cultural diversity in the Arab world, understood in the book as largely overlapping with the 22 member states of the Arab League.² One of the important dimensions of the regional cultural heterogeneity is, of course, directly related to the fact that the Middle East is the birthplace of the three global monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Hence, one of the types of diversity taken into account in the book is a religious heterogeneity which most commonly relates