

*The Age of Migration: International Population Movements
in the Modern World*

by Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller
New York–London: Guildford Press, 2009
ISBN 978-1-606-23069-5
Softcover, \$42.00, 370 pp.

Reviewed by Md Kamrul Islam
Department of Sociology, University of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)
mdkamrul@ualberta.ca

The *Age of Migration: International Population Movement in the Modern World* by Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller investigates a variety of topics on international migration. Its thirteen chapters can be categorized into six major sections. The first section, chapter 1, provides a brief introduction that focuses on the challenges of global migration, general trends of contemporary migration, international migration in the context of globalization, and growing ethnic diversity within immigrant-receiving countries. The chapter pertinently sets the contexts for the rest of the book.

The second section, comprised of chapters 2 and 3, provides the conceptual framework for understanding the history of international migration. In these chapters, Castles and Miller effectively overview theoretical explanations of international migration, including neoclassical theory, the historical-structural approach, world system theory, migration network theory, and transnational theory. The authors also carefully illustrate key developments associated with migration, such as the formation of ethnic minorities, the emergence of ethnic and racial divisions, the role of culture and state, and the changing pattern of citizenship. It is also argued that while migration facilitates development in both sending and receiving countries, socioeconomic development in the migrant-sending countries would not necessarily be expected to reduce the flow of migration to the developed countries. Readers will find this section of the book exceptionally instructive with respect to theories of migration and ethnic minority formation in receiving countries.

In the third section, which consists of chapters 4 through 7, Castles and Miller focus on the history of international migration. It is described that prior to the mid-1960s, the main forces of migration were the spread of European colonialism and the emergence of industrialization. The history of “migratory movements” to Europe, North America, and Oceania since 1945 is discussed in chapter 5. It is shown that migration during this period rapidly increased and was predominantly motivated by economic considerations associated with the globalization of production, distribution, and investment, and with the globalization of culture. It is shown in chapter 6 that in this period the largest migratory movement was from the Asia-Pacific region to the USA and Canada, followed by movements to the Persian Gulf, Australia, and New Zealand. The history of migration in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America is presented in chapter 7. Intercontinental migration was predominant, with some of these movements being to former colonial powers. During this period, oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., Qatar, and Libya became major migrant-receiving countries, attracting workers from nearby regions and from afar alike. The migrants in these regions have skilled and unskilled workers. During this period, the world saw other types of migratory flows, including forced migrants, economic refugees, undocumented migrants, and the trafficking of women and children.

The two chapters in section four (chapters 8 and 9) focus on state control of immigration. Chapter 8 deals with the efforts by nation-states to regulate immigration to their countries through “imposition of employer sanctions, phasing in and out of temporary foreign worker admissions policies, legalizations, measures against human trafficking, and measures concerning refugees and asylum seekers” (p. 205). In 2006, Afghanistan was the highest refugee-producing country, followed by Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia. Pakistan was the host country of the highest number refugees, followed by Iran, USA, Syria, Germany, Jordan, Tanzania, UK, China, and

Chad. As noted in chapter nine, the increasing flow of migrants and refugees worldwide has become a serious security concern in the postwar era because of the active involvement of “non-state actors” in many terrorist activities all over the world—including the attacks of 9/11. The authors argue that “the frequent insecurity of the people of poorer countries” is linked to various cultural, socioeconomic, and political threats in the migrant-receiving countries (p. 212). Castles and Miller provide compelling empirical evidence to support their argument.

In the fifth section, which consists of chapters 10 through 12, Castles and Miller illustrate the long-term impacts of migration in receiving societies. The assessment of labour market performance in chapter 10 shows that migrants in the rich receiving countries are overwhelmingly represented in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, such as manual work in industries, cleaning, catering, and domestic work and care. Migrants are generally overwhelmingly represented in jobs that are not commensurate with their human capital, and have higher unemployment rates than the native-born host population. In chapter 11, the authors recommend that governments in receiving countries should provide “full rights in all social spheres” to permanent immigrants to ensure their better integration into mainstream society (p. 274). Chapter 12 examines the extent to which international migration has fostered tense relations between homeland governments and the governments of migrant-receiving states. Presenting examples from many countries, Castles and Miller demonstrate that the rising inflow of legal and undocumented migration has led to the politicization of immigration by a variety of political parties in receiving countries, whereby political parties often gain power on anti-immigration platforms.

Finally, the sixth section, comprised solely of chapter 13, is on the topic of migration and mobility in the 21st century. Castles and Miller predict that below-replacement-level fertility and increasing ageing populations in developed countries will increase the demand for labour from the developing world. In addition, they envisage that “North Africa and Mexico may soon become zones of immigration” (p. 301). However, the authors did not point out any cogent ground behind the latter argument.

This book has many strengths. The theoretical frameworks and history of migration outlined in sections 2 and 3 help readers to understand the social, political, and economic challenges that immigrant-receiving countries face in an era of globalization. The authors substantially assessed the labour market performance of migrants in receiving countries, and this should generate interest among policymakers who hope to design more effective programs for integrating immigrants into their host societies. Another key strength of the book is that the authors provide guides to further reading at the end of each chapter. A website (www.age-of-migration.com) has been set up for further information.

Apart from these strengths, the book contains a few relatively minor, though important, limitations. First, the authors give limited attention to the increasing flow of temporary foreign workers, and the extent to which these workers are exploited by employers and governments in receiving countries. There is convincing evidence, based on the experience of some countries, that temporary foreign workers are subject to a number of rigid conditions, such as prearranged employers, locations, length of employment, and type of employment (Sharma 2005). Temporary foreign workers are often systematically excluded from various social services, and subject to deportation for changing their employers without permission from the legal authorities. More attention to this topic is necessary. Second, the book does not explicitly address questions about the effect of economic recessions on migratory movements. The aftermath of the recent economic recession of 2008–2009 shows that there has been a reverse global migratory movement from migrant-receiving countries to migrant-sending countries. For example, the number of return-migrants from the United States to India and China has increased significantly; Brazil, Argentina, and Chile are experiencing greater numbers of migrants from Portugal and Spain; young graduates from Greece are heading towards Germany and Australia; and millions of people from Tajikistan and other Central Asian nations are migrating to work in Russia (Grant 2011). The rate of illegal migration from Mexico to the United States has tumbled to a 40-year low (Cave 2012).

Overall, this book by Castles and Miller is an excellent contribution to the literature. Using a rich combination of data and relevant research findings, the authors clearly spell out the factors that determine “ethnic and cultural diversity” in migrant-receiving countries, foster development of “transnational networks,” and facilitate expansion of “cultural interchange.” This book should be required reading for undergraduate and graduate courses on migration.

References

- Cave, D. 2012. Immigration upended: Migrants’ new paths reshaping Latin America. *The New York Times*, January 5. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.
- Grant, T. 2011. Economics: Promised lands. *The Globe and Mail*, December 31, pp. F6, F7.
- Sharma, N. 2005. *Home Economics: Nationalism and the Making of ‘Migrant Workers’ in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.