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## CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE BOOK „MIGRATION THEORY. TALKING ACROSS DISCIPLINES”

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**Abstract:** *IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES’ ISSUES REPRESENT TOPICS WHICH HOLD THE HEADLINES OF NEWSPAPERS EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD TODAY. SINCE IT IS A HEATED SUBJECT-MATTER WITH IMPLICATIONS IN THE MAIN ASPECTS OF LIFE, THE AIM OF THE PRESENT ARTICLE IS TO FOCUS ON SOME OF THE DOMAINS INTERESTED IN MIGRATION. THEREFORE, THE ARTICLE FOCUSES UPON THE BOOK “MIGRATION THEORY. TALKING ACROSS DISCIPLINES” PUBLISHED WITH THE ROUTLEDGE IN 2022, WITH THE AIM TO CAPTURE THE IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION FOR THE SCIENCES ANTHROPOLOGY, DEMOGRAPHY, ECONOMICS, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, LAW, POLITICAL SCIENCES, SOCIOLOGY.*

**Keywords:** MIGRATION, EMIGRANT, IMMIGRANT, REFUGEE, CROSS-DISCIPLINARY

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### INTRODUCTION

The articles in the Telegraph of 14/ 12/ 2022, *Migrant feared dead in the Channel* and then a late one *Trawler skipper prevents worse disaster as migrants’ dinghy sinks in freezing Channel* describe scenes like the World War Two with people swimming in the cold waters. The story goes like this. On December 14, at three in the morning a boat with presumably 47 migrants began to sink in the ice-cold waters of the Channel at a temperature of -4C. Fortunately, a fisherman prevented a disaster. 31 of the migrants coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, Senegal and India were saved, four declared missing and four drowned. The air and sea rescue operation involved 10 vessels from the Navy, Border Force, RNLT and the French coastguard as well as helicopters. The migrants told rescuers that they paid 5000 pounds each to smugglers in France for passage in UK. The Home Secretary declared that they should find a way through joined efforts to “destroy the business model of people smugglers, evil organized criminals who treat people as cargo” and thus put an end to illegal crossings. In short, migration is a



serious issue, and we shall see in the following pages how different disciplines involves in doing research on it.

### CROSS-DISCIPLINARY TALK ON IMMIGRATION

Immigration and refugees' issues represent serious issues which hold the headlines (The Telegraph, *Migrants feared dead in the Channel, Trawler skipper prevents worse disaster as migrants' dinghy sinks in freezing Channel*, 14/12/2022) of newspapers everywhere in the world today. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, editors, in “Migration Theory. Talking Across Disciplines” (Brettell and Holifield, 2022, pp. 1-29) begin their discussion on the topic in their Introduction. The book published in its fourth edition with Routledge, New York outlines important aspect regarding the international migration and immigration worldwide.

Nevertheless, before talking about the editors' endeavour, it is worth refining the terms “emigrant”, “immigrant” and “refugee”. Therefore, I will deal with refining the terms, especially given the fact that last year, my colleagues and I working on a project about refugees, while studying the “Babes Bolyai”, European MA in Translation and Terminology Studies. In other words, I can say that I am somehow familiar with the subject-matter.

According to IOM glossary on migration, the definition for “emigrant” is “From the perspective of the country of departure, a person who moves from his or her country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.” (IOM glossary on migration, p. 63). The definition for “immigrant”, “From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of his or her nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. (IOM glossary on migration, p. 103). The definition of “refugee (1951 Convention)”, according to the same glossary is “A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (IOM glossary, p. 171)

Interestingly, the authors of IOM Glossary for Migration state in the first forward that “effective cooperation among relevant actors is important” (IOM glossary, p. iii). This cooperation is important because the states speak different languages and the parable of the tower of Babel becomes a reality. In addition, the actors involved in this complex phenomenon make use of “inconsistent vocabulary”. This being the case, a common glossary utilized by all the actors involved represent a necessity.

The necessity resides in that migration itself epitomizes a reality, therefore, the migration terminology, as well as an insight into the migration theory contributes to understanding this complex phenomenon, which is migration in its every aspect. Hence, “Migration Theory. Talking across Disciplines” represent the contributors’ efforts to conceive “a unified theory of migration” (Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 2022, p. 2) examining thus a cross-disciplinary approach encompassing motives for moving, as well as possible result of that movement, namely history, demography, economy, sociology, anthropology, geography, political sciences and law. The scholars, specialists in the above mentioned disciplines, will assess and analyze the central aspects (conceptions, questions and theoretical perspectives) underlying the study of migration both in the respective discipline and in the intersection among disciplines.

Nonetheless, the editors’ introduction goes even further in explaining the distinction between “migration” and “immigration” in an endnote, which we dare to speak about here. Thus, the conceptual



distinction between the two is necessary. The editors clarify the two terms in that “migration” refers to the action taking place within the national borders whereas, “immigration” takes place across the national borders. (Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 2022, pp.21-22)

Judging from these definitions, the issue of migration is not a simple one. International organizations as International Organization of Migration are already in possession of specialized glossaries comprising terms related to migration. Unfortunately, Romania does not. Maybe this is because the issue is not very old with us. People began to leave Romania first in the Ceausescu regime for political reasons, then after 1989, in search for a better life. From this point of view, Romania is among the first 20 countries with 4 m fellow nationals living outside the borders of the country. While immigrants to Romania is a relatively new issue. The percentage is 6 to 1 – emigrant versus immigrant. (Source: IOM in Romania).

Whatever the topic, the inquiry begins with a question. Consequently, we shall examine the questions constituting the departure point for each discipline analyzing the migration, each from its individual perspective in alphabetical order.

To begin with, anthropologists address to the research questions, “how does migration effect cultural change and affect ethnic identity”. In addition, the anthropologists’ units of analysis, as resulting in the table (Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 2022, p. 4) reside in interviewing individuals, households and groups. Their dominant theories are relational while their sample hypotheses explain that social networks help maintain cultural difference. Moreover, in their ethnographic endeavour, anthropologists’ tendency is to be context specific and engage in cross-cultural comparisons making possible generalizations across space and time. Their focus is on capturing the experience of being an immigrant as well as, the meaning of social and cultural changes, from the migrants’ point of view of leaving one context and entering another.

On the other hand, the demographers tackle with the question “how does migration affect population change”. Thus, they carry on their analysis at the macrolevel, while the unit of analysis are the populations themselves. The dominant theory is rationalism similar endeavour from this point of view to the economists’ research. Demographers’ sample hypothesis holds that migration has a major impact on size, yet a small impact on age structure. In this sense, they document the pattern and direction of migration flows, as well as the characteristics of migrants (age, sex, occupation, education and so on). Demographers find migration as one factor responsible for population change, the other two being fertility and mortality.

Economists’ research question is “what explains the propensity to migrate and its effects”. The specialists in economics work with microlevel of analysis while the units of analysis are the individuals. Their dominant theory is rationalist namely, cost-benefit and utility maximizing behavior. Their sample hypothesis refers to variation of incorporation depending on the level of human capital of immigrants. The central debate for economists is “under what conditions with the most favorable (in human capital terms and for labor market success) individuals migrate” (Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 2022, p. 6).

In turn, geographers tackle with the research question “what explains the spatial patterns of migration”. Their level of analysis is micro, meso (examines a midrange-sized population, source science direct) and macro while the units of analysis are individuals, households and groups. The utilized dominant theories are relational, structured and transnational. Their hypothesis holds that incorporation depend on ethnic networks and residential patterns. Within their migration research, the geographers’ attention focuses on studying the relationship between employment patterns and residential patterns, the formation and development of ethnic enclaves and the changing migration pattern of various ethnic and racial groups, the authors of the Introduction explain.



Historians' research question is “how do we understand the immigrant experience”. To find out, they work at microlevels with individuals and groups as units of analysis. The historians' dominant theories reside in avoiding theory and hypothesis testing. They preoccupy with finding out how various groups settled and shaped their communities while constructing their identities thus analyzing the migration process.

The way, the law scholars act is also telling. Their research question is “how does the law influence migration”. Such being the case, their level of analysis is micro as well as macro, interviewing those working in the political and legal systems as units of analysis. Their dominant theories comprise institutionalist and rationalist ones like the social sciences research. The authors' Introduction explain that the researchers on political and legal matters are “relative newcomers in the arena of migration research” (Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 2022, p. 7). Interestingly, legal scholars inquire the criteria to obtain legal visas and how the country policy addresses the subject-matter of family reunification and refugee status.

Political sciences concern with the research question “why do states have difficulty in controlling the migration”. They carry on their activity on more macrolevel of inquiry while the units of analysis are political and international systems. The political sciences rely on institutionalist and rationalist theories while the sample hypothesis reside in the fact that states are often captured by pro-immigrant interests. Interestingly, the scholars of political sciences address three themes (Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 2022, p. 8) namely, the role of the nation-state in controlling the migration flows and borders, the impact of migration on the institutions of sovereignty and citizenship, the relationship between migration and foreign policy while the third refers to the question of incorporation arising issues of ethical, normative and legal nature.

Finally, the research question in the case of sociology is “what explains incorporation and exclusion”. The sociologists' research develops at macrolevels having as units of analysis ethnic groups and social class. Just like the anthropologists, the sociologists rely on classic authors in the domain of sociology namely Marx, Durkheim or Weber (Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 2022, p. 5). They make intensive use of structuralist and institutionalist theories while their work hypothesis is that incorporation varies with social and human capital.

## CONCLUSION

The two articles quoted emphasize the issue of migration is a serious one with implications not only in many disciplines, but also in many aspects of our lives. The corollary of disciplines, which tackle with thorough research on migration includes anthropology, demography, economy, geography, history and law, political sciences and sociology. Each of the disciplines mentioned above tackles with one or more questions triggering upon intensive research. The research these disciplines carry on encompasses levels and units of analysis, dominant theories and sample hypothesis.

The gravity of the issue of migration is attested by the preoccupation of IOM to make an English glossary, which aims at establishing common terms to be utilized by all the interested parties.



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