
Book Review

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Crisis and Migration. Implications of the Eurozone crisis for Perceptions, Politics, and Policies of Migration
by: Pieter Bo Bevelander and Bo Petersson (Eds.)
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Academic reflection on a phenomenon that currently attracts attention in media and politics is a challenging task. To grasp such phenomena scientifically is difficult since the beginning and end of what is being observed is often still in flux. Accordingly, research on topical issues, their causes and consequences is a messy business. The research assembled by Pieter Bo Bevelander and Bo Petersson in *Crisis and Migration* takes up this challenge and provides one of the first academic accounts of the implications that the 'Eurozone crisis' had on 'perceptions, politics, and policies of migration'.¹

The editors introduce their volume by setting it in a global context in which the European Union's (EU) economic and demographic developments are considered as key factors for the bloc's competitiveness. Immigration is key in this picture. Even more so since Bevelander and Peterson identify opposing trends in times of economic downturn: While public and political salience of the issue increases, the decline of Europe's population demands large-scale immigration. Therefore, a 'contextual framework' is suggested that considers 'micro and macro perspectives' on the regulation of immigration (p.19). This means perception and policy on the supra-, national, and local level are of interest. At the same time, the editors are well aware that a contextual framework too will have difficulties to measure causal relations between the economic crisis and migration policy. Policy response to the crisis can be delayed and have different effects on entry and residence conditions of specific groups of migrants, immigrant labour or family migrants. This is probably why most of the research presented in the volume has an interpretive and constructivist approach and avoids causal inference and its pitfalls when applied to a phenomenon that is still evolving. Authors predominantly analyse how perceptions of immigrants in policy discourse at the micro and macro level are constructed. A common denominator to the studies is that they reveal the securitisation of migration and the negative and discriminatory framing of immigrants in public, policy and worksite discourse.

The volume succeeds in offering a wide variety of perspectives on immigrants in Europe ranging from undocumented migrants' depiction in EU policy documents (Linus Kullving) to the representation of unaccompanied minors in Swedish extremist blogs on the internet (Karina Hirvonen). The research allows insights into the political

discourse against immigration in Greece (Eleni Tampakoglu) as well as the effect of an increase in illegality by enforcement measures in the Netherlands (Hortense Jongen). The ambition for comprehensiveness, looking at implications of 'crisis' on migrants and policy at the local, national and supranational EU level brings together ethnographic case studies (David Sausdal), frame analysis (Sarah Scuzzarello) and policy analysis (Hortense Jongen). Undoubtedly, this methodological and topical pluralism opens new perspectives on the political and societal conditions that immigrants encounter in current Europe.

However, the volume's great variety comes at the price of less coherence. The title of the volume promises to focus on the implications of the Eurozone crisis on perceptions, politics and policies of migration. The editors' introduction and the second chapter of Timothy Hatton provide for an excellent overview of current trends as well as research hypotheses describing the relationship between the crisis and migration patterns, policy, and politics. Interestingly, Hatton makes the observation that a policy backlash against rather open European immigration policies did not happen due to the crisis. Concurrently, he asks 'why' stasis rather than change can be observed. He explains the lack of change by three factors: first, he observes that immigration has been responsive to the business cycle. Allegedly, this had the effect that the decline in employment was followed by a decline in net immigration reducing pressure on the labour market. Second, and related to the first, immigration had not, despite the crisis, become a salient issue in public opinion. Third, according to research on the effects of EU and international law on member states' sovereignty in defining their immigration policy, Hatton finds that EU member states are constrained by these conditions to restrict refugee and family migration.

The first and second chapter of the volume present preliminary findings and hypotheses on the crisis and its effects. The overview purpose of these chapters triggers the reader's expectation for a more in-depth examination on policy stasis, immigration flows, and policy constraints of EU member states in the chapters to come. Are we actually observing no policy change? This finding is at odds with the OECD's immigration policy outlook observing more restrictive migration policy in some European countries, cited in Eleni Tampakoglu's contribution on Greece (p.104). EU countries faced very different conditions during the crisis and this seems to make variance in policy response more likely. The contributions finding securitisation and discriminatory narratives in public and policy discourse also seem to be at odds with Hatton's observations on immigration not having become a salient issue during the crisis. Surprisingly, half of the contributions do not explicitly deal with the economic crisis of 2008 to 2012 and refer to general crisis moments in recent history. The focus on different incidents of crisis might explain why authors come to different conclusions. A rigorous comparative framing of the volume would have offered the chance to look at policies, public opinion, and migration patterns in a more coherent way. Also, the case studies presented in most chapters slightly over represent Nordic countries. In this regard, the case studies on the Netherlands and Greece are refreshing. A contribution on the relation between the crisis and immigration policy in Britain, France, Germany, as well as one more southern European country would have added empirical depth to the volume.

The contribution of *Crisis and Migration* is its variety. It provides for insights into immigration regulation from a multi-level perspective and offers fascinating accounts on how immigrants are perceived, policed and categorised in European societies. Not only the senior researchers that contributed to the volume but also the research of the doctoral and post-doctoral researchers is well conceived, theoretically and methodologically

sound. The effects of the crisis on migration policy are a complex relationship for social science research. Bevelander and Peterson are among the first to publish research on this question. With *Crisis and Migration* they have surely laid the foundation for further scientific endeavours to come.

Notes

- 1 Research on repercussions of the crisis on immigration policies and migration was also presented by Nieuwenhuysen, J., Duncan, H. and Neerup, S. (Ed.) (2012), *International Migration in Uncertain Times*, Queen's University, School of Policy Studies, Kingston.