



Book reviews

International Handbook on the Economics of Migration. Amelie F. Constant and Klaus F. Zimmermann (eds.). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013. 573 pp. £139.50. ISBN 978-1-84542-629-3

In the current globalization context none of the countries is excluded from the international migration flows. They are either countries of origin or transit or destination countries for migrants, or they present these three characteristics simultaneously. The implications of the migration related phenomena on political, economic, social, cultural life are manifold and have made migration an extremely exciting field of research, generating a rich literature worldwide.

In such a dense space *The International Handbook on the Economics of Migration* has been remarked from the very beginning as an exquisite work which deepens and widens the migration economics, opening new doors for the research in this area. As a result of their huge expertise in migration studies, the editors – Amelie F. Constant and Klaus F. Zimmermann – have succeeded in gathering 44 excellent experts in the field and to produce 28 state-of-the-art chapters on very challenging contemporary migration issues.

In fact, one of the distinctive features of the handbook is the integration in the mainstream of migration economics of a series of issues relatively unexplored or less explored from an economic perspective compared to, for example, sociology or psychology. At the same time, the classic issues are addressed from new, original angles, shedding more light on specific, timely aspects.

In the former category can be mentioned topics like the relationship between migration and happiness, child labour migrants, the economic consequences of inter-ethnic marriages, the spatial mismatch in ethnic hiring, the controversial issue of educational mismatch, the healthy migrant hypothesis and the obesity issue, the refugee and asylum migration, the assimilation of refugees, natural disasters and migration, human smuggling and trafficking in human beings with the clear distinction between the two, the links between immigration and crime, etc. In tackling most of these topics the authors review the existing theoretical work, reveal the scarcity of empirical evidence, indicate the areas where additional research is needed, propose new investigation methods and clearly identify challenges for future policy advice.

For example, when ethnic hiring is addressed, the barriers to employment are discussed in terms of discrimination, spatial mismatch and networks. Even if there is large evidence of ethnic

discrimination offered by audit or correspondence studies, it may be possible that these studies do not really identify discrimination. Moreover, the new method proposed for coping with the identification problem needs further development so as to be applied to data from both new and existing studies and thus to check the robustness of the evidence of ethnic discrimination. In another register, an exciting investigation deals with human smuggling and human trafficking, pointing out the different mechanisms and implications in the two cases, even if they may look quite similar at first glance. An analytical framework for understanding the micro-foundations of the human smuggling market is provided, and a large collaboration between economists, sociologists, anthropologists, legal scholars, etc. is proposed in order to systematically process the available empirical evidence, so as to calibrate the existing and new theories in this field. As far as the issue of independent child labour migrants is concerned, starting from the finding that the literature in the field is still in an infancy stage, the needs in terms of measurement and analysis of causes and consequences of this phenomenon are identified. It is emphasized that the correct, profound understanding of the relationship between the independent child migration circumstances and its repercussions is a *sine-qua-non* condition for conceiving the correct policy mix aiming at helping the independent child migrants.

The latter group of topics includes issues relating to migration decision and migratory flows, temporary, return, repeat or circular migration, skilled migration, labour market consequences of mobility, immigrants in risky occupations, the impact of migration on the family left behind, the economic impact of migration on the sending and host countries, immigrant selection, political migration and citizenship ascension, the evaluation of immigration policies, welfare migration, diaspora resources and policies. In all cases new research perspectives are highlighted.

When, for example, temporary, return, repeat or circular migration are focused on, new challenges for modelling and predicting migration patterns are identified, accompanied by adequate policy measures to manage circular migration. In relation to labour market consequences of mobility, the enlarged Europe is offered as a relevant case, being demonstrated that not only 'the pre-enlargement fears of labour mobility proved to be unjustified' but, 'rather, there appear to be positive effects on the EU's productivity' (p. 3). One can also find an interesting debate on the welfare magnet hypothesis, which discusses the likelihood of migrants' movement to countries with generous welfare systems. Based on solid empirical evidence it is argued that the existing literature has failed to notice the existence of different migration regimes and the possibility of a reverse causal relationship between welfare spending and immigration. The discussion about diaspora resources and policies enlarges the existing approaches as well, the main message being that in a globalizing world it is not just a source of remittances but it also has an important contribution to increasing bilateral trade and investments between the home and the residence countries. At the same time diaspora members can support the development of the capital markets and the firms' access to new technologies and skills in their origin countries, etc.

The above considerations have been meant to emphasize that the handbook will definitely become a milestone in the migration reference lists in the forthcoming years and will serve as an excellent guide for both researchers and policy-makers. The editors as well as all contributors deserve congratulations and the entire appreciation for this outstanding accomplishment.

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Reshaping Metropolitan America: Development Trends and Opportunities to 2030. Arthur C. Nelson. Washington: Island Press. 2013. 122 pp. + notes 9 pp. + refs 10 pp. + index 9 pp. Cloth \$70.00. ISBN 978-1-61091-019-4. Paperback \$35.00. ISBN 978-1-61091-033-0. Ebook \$34.99. ISBN 978-161091-222-8.

Baby boomers are in or nearing retirement ages, real energy costs are rising, and those of us in the developed world increasingly find ourselves entrenched in a service-based economy. The strokes that Nelson uses to paint America's future landscape are laid on this basic canvas. It is like an update of Alvin Toffler's *Third Wave* but with an eye toward the built environment.

Chris Nelson is an academic planner, now at the University of Utah, who is probably best known for his work in growth management and urban containment. So, his artistic school is, not surprisingly, one of 'new urbanism.' For those 'not in the know,' new urbanist thinking, according to the *Charter of New Urbanism* (<http://www.cnu.org/charter>) is that:

neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice.

Nelson's core theses are average pay per job is falling and workers are becoming more independent from their workplace – more like freelance workers or subcontractors. At least partially as a hedge against work-related risks, householders will therefore be more likely to avoid homeownership, although tighter finance rules will also play a role. Lower expected income and rising congestion (due to continued population growth) will induce householders to seek smaller residences closer to their work places. Baby boomers also will downsize to mitigate retirement risks and to enable greater exploitation of urban amenities. Lowest-income groups will continue to filter towards the suburbs, which become more cost-effective than current locations. These trends along with rising energy costs should tilt modal choice toward public transit and active transportation options (walking and biking).

The core force in unfolding of the scenario in *Reshaping Metropolitan America* is the behaviour of baby boomers. So, any uncertainty affiliated with their future behaviour poses a risk to Nelson's proposed future. Will baby boomers adhere to new urbanist thinking as much as he and others suggest? He notes (p. 37) that 'they want to live in places that are accessible to key destinations such as shopping, services, and medical care'. I cannot disagree with this statement or findings from surveys of seniors that he uses to fortify his argument. But we have every reason to believe this batch of seniors is likely to be different from those in years past. Boomers in America, at least the early set, have displayed exceptional behaviour compared to predecessors of the same age. I am not saying the set of baby boomers is Michael Porter's competitive advantage in action at the very micro-est of levels (which is an interesting sociological concept), rather I am merely pointing out the cohort's apparent exceptionalism. Maybe this group has already located itself optimally for the long run. Perhaps due to the rising focus in healthy food and exercise, boomers will live even longer than currently expected. Such factors would at least delay the movements Nelson anticipates by many years.

Nelson's militant future against McMansions may be unjustified as well. He suggests that many of them are likely to be transformed into multifamily housing, just as many larger homes of the early twentieth century were retrofitted into multiple units during the Great Depression. To support this notion, Nelson cites his forecasts for increasing land use intensity and wealth concentration.

Nelson outlines pathways to help move his perceived future closer to us. He naturally focuses on zoning for more-compact development and pushing for transit and ped-bike policies, including transit-oriented developments. He also mentions (i) eliminating tax benefits for owner-occupied housing, (ii) eliminating exclusionary zoning, (iii) creating ordinances that legalize accessory dwellings, (iv) including the cost of transportation in mortgage underwriting conventions, and (v) encouraging local governments to be more disciplined when doling out housing unit permits. It's not clear to me (or Nelson) how many of these policy elements could be effected. Indeed, the first two at least have been hotly debated within governments over the years. Moreover, it has always been my understanding that the tax code was the only viable way governments can subsidize positive neighbourhood spillovers of homeownership – a feature that Nelson neglects to dispute.

My main issue with this book, like many others that have extremely innovative perspectives, is that its content is often internally redundant. Nelson made a book out of what should have been a somewhat lengthy journal article. Yes, a substantial amount of material is needed to support his contentions. But once supported and mentioned, such matter need not have been substantiated again and again. And while relationships among much of the material necessarily is inextricably entwined, duplicate mentions of key factors' relationships seemed overloaded on the reader across interior chapters.

All said, however, I enjoyed the book thoroughly and have shared it with planning students learning urban economics. Its futures perspective is a breath of fresh air, although its half-life is likely to be rather short. I encourage others to give it a shot.

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