



International Sociological Association

Research Committee on Sociology of Migration (RC-31)

RC-31 Newsletter, Spring 2011

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From the President

Towards a Visual Sociology of Migration?

Marco Martiniello

We live in a world of images and sounds. We are all confronted directly in our daily life with lots of images and sounds produced and mediated and distributed by various channels such as the internet, radio, television, cinema, newspapers, exhibitions, DVD, etc. There is a huge literature coming from the sociology of communication and media that explains and analyses the process of production, diffusion and reception of those images and sounds and how they can affect our social behaviour. It seems obvious that all the images dealing with migration have to be related with the attitudes of the general public towards migration and migrants. Remember the clusters of Albanians on a boat on their way to Italy on the front page of *Time* in 1991. It really affected opinion and encouraged the fear of invasion that developed not only in Italy but elsewhere in Europe and in the world. More recently, images of the exodus provoked by the changes of regimes in the Arab world have also fuelled the same fear of invasion of Europe at least.

Since we live in a world of images and sounds, it is surprising that so few of us use images (photographs, films, videos, drawings) in the process of constructing academic knowledge about migration, integration and ethnic relations. Of course, some of us select carefully the cover picture of our books. Some of us even use photographs and maps to illustrate our arguments. But generally, very few of us use

images (still or moving) in the process of research itself. A visual sociology of migration barely exists. My point here is not to say that we should stop writing articles and books to engage in the production of sociological films (not simple documentaries!). What I would like to convey is that it would be useful to discuss what we could gain from different uses of images in

the process of research and also beyond, in making our results public.

Provided that we have a solid theoretical framework and clear research hypotheses (what filmmakers usually don't have!), I see at least two advantages of producing images, especially films, in the process of research. First, producing images with research subjects can be a fruitful methodological device in order to produce detailed qualitative data on the migration process seen from their subjective point of view but also common analysis involving the researcher and the researched. Second, besides our usual academic publication tasks, presenting

the results of our research in film form can make them more attractive to a wider public and even to policy makers.

Obviously, my argument goes beyond the field of the sociology of migration and ethnic relations, but I am convinced that for us a deep reflection on it would be welcome, in collaboration with our colleagues from visual anthropology.

Marco Martiniello
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RC-31 President

NEWS FROM THE AMERICAS contributed by **Gustavo Verduzco, RC31 Vice-President**

In the United States

In the United States the Senate has voted on the "DREAM Act", a bill to give certain undocumented immigrant youth, brought to the United States as children, the chance to earn legal status after completing two years of college or military service. Although this initiative was blocked by the Republicans, some experts believe that it will only be a temporary delay to add a Republican tone to it. If this bill is eventually approved, it might be seen at least as an initial and timid accomplishment in establishing a (lengthy) legalization process that many consider necessary.

A new study published recently finds the number of illegal immigrants residing in the U.S. last year was roughly 11.2 million, a number almost unchanged from 2009. The level of illegal migrants had declined for the first time in two decades, dropping 8 percent from 2007, probably as a result of at least three factors: an economic crisis, border enforcement, and (in the case of Mexicans) because of a decrease in the number of young people of certain ages in Mexico who might be suitable as migrants to that country. This drop is then mainly a demographic effect due to past migration tendencies.

The number of undocumented people residing in the U.S. who were in the labor force also was unchanged last year at 8 million, representing about 5 percent of workers in the U.S., after reaching a peak of 8.4 million in 2007, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, which based its analysis on census survey data.

The above data confirm now what was predicted a few years back (at least for the case of Mexican migration to the U.S.) in the sense that migration from that country was going to start to decline mainly because of a labor force shrinkage in those niches of labor in the U.S. (due to past migration flows) and also because of a demographic shortage in Mexico as noted above.

In Mexico

Two new laws in Mexico represent important positive changes for migrants either coming to the country or passing through (as in the case of Central Americans). The new "Law for Refugees", issued in February (2011), establishes that any foreign person seeking protection in Mexico due to persecution should not be rejected nor sent back to his/her country of origin. In terms of the Mexican context this law will help to ease some problems faced by a good number of foreign people entering the country.

MEMBERS' NEW BOOKS

Uzi Rebhun and Lilach Lev Ari: *American Israelis: Migration, Transnationalism, and Diasporic Identity*, Brill 2010 ([link to publisher](#))

This book is a scientific and comprehensive analysis of Israelis who live in the United States. Using different complementary sources of data, and through cutting-edge approaches in the social sciences, this volume examines the settlement patterns of the Israeli immigrants, their social profile, their economic achievements, their Americanization processes, as well as the nature and rhythm of their Jewish identification including changes in attachment to the homeland. The characteristics of the immigrants shed light on Israeli society. At the same time they also have important implications for the Jewish community in the host country and on Jewish continuity in America.



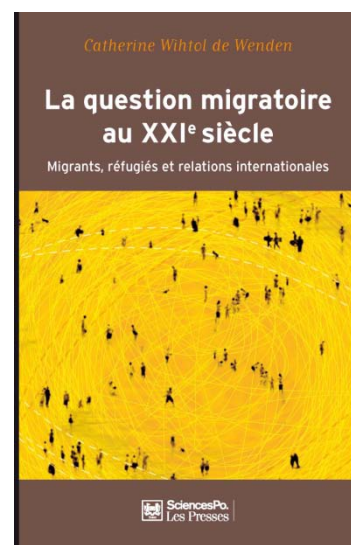
Catherine Wihtol de Wenden: *La question migratoire au XXI^e siècle: Migrants, réfugiés et relations internationales*, Presses de Sciences Po 2010 ([link to publisher](#))

Humanisant la mondialisation et contribuant au « rapprochement du monde dans le monde », les migrations, facteurs essentiels du développement humain, font aussi partie des globalisations contradictoires qui voient s'opposer objectifs politiques et impératifs économiques, sociaux, culturels et éthiques.

Un monde plus fluide : élites, migrants économiques, réfugiés, apatrides, les catégories se brouillent, plaidant pour un droit à la mobilité qui remet en question les notions de frontières, de souveraineté, de citoyenneté. De nombreux pays sont aujourd'hui pays d'accueil et de départ. De nouvelles situations apparaissent : déplacés environnementaux, migrants intérieurs et pendulaires, touristes, soulignant l'interdépendance d'un monde en mouvement.

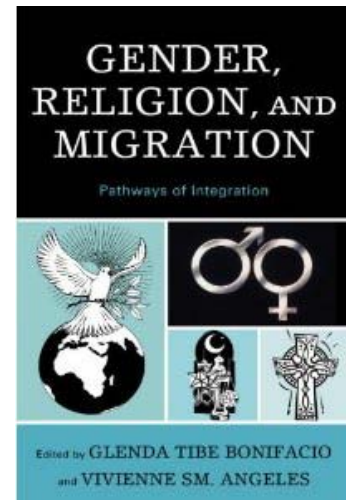
Réel enjeu planétaire, les migrations transforment les relations internationales, redéfinissent la souveraineté des États d'accueil, mettent en scène les États de départ, font surgir un individu acteur de sa vie, et demandent une diplomatie nouvelle faisant appel à une gouvernance mondiale et régionale des migrations.

Pédagogique et exhaustif, ce livre, écrit par une spécialiste à la notoriété internationale, restitue l'état des connaissances sur le sujet, les replace dans leur environnement intellectuel et historique. Il a vocation, au-delà de militer pour une diplomatie internationale des migrations, à devenir la référence sur les questions migratoires.



Glenda Tibe Bonifacio and Vivienne S. M. Angeles: Gender, Religion, and Migration: Pathways of Integration, Lexington Books 2010 ([link to publisher](#))

Gender, Religion and Migration is the first multidisciplinary collection on the intersection of gender and religion in the integration of different groups of immigrants, migrant workers, youths, and students in host societies in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America. It investigates the linkages and tensions between religion and integration from a gendered perspective. By examining the contemporary significance of religion in the context of global migrations, the fifteen research-based essays provide new insights and perspectives on the often missed link between the differing ways in which male and female immigrants find meanings of faith-beliefs and religious traditions to belong in foreign lands, even residents' faith-based activism involving illegal migrants. While religion provides mechanisms for negotiating immigrant life in the host countries, it also inhibits integration of immigrants especially in countries where the majority religion is different. This dual phenomenon of religion promoting and inhibiting integration is critically examined in the lives of Filipinos, Brazilians, Indians, Polish, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Kenyans, Nigerians, and Middle Eastern peoples. The book also engages various theories on gender, religion and migration and demonstrates the fluidity of gender construction as people cross borders.



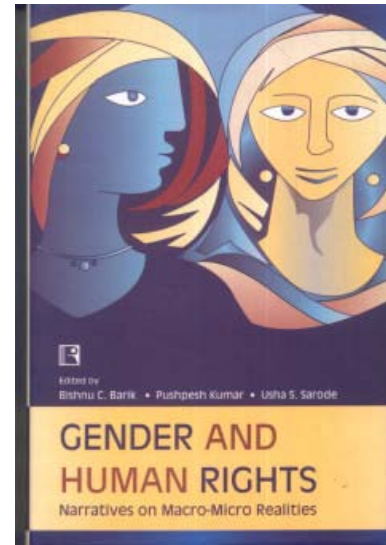
Nina Glick Schiller and Thomas Faist (eds.): Migration, Development, and Transnationalization: A Critical Stance. Berghahn, 2010 ([link to publisher](#))

The relationship between migration and development is becoming an important field of study, yet the fundamentals - analytical tools, conceptual framework, political stance - are not being called into question or dialogue. This volume provides a valuable alternative perspective to the current literature as the contributors explore the contradictory discourses about migration and the role these discourses play in perpetuating inequality and a global regime of militarized surveillance. The assumptions surrounding the asymmetrical transfers of resources that accompany migration are deeply skewed and continue to reflect the interests of the most powerful states and the institutions that serve their interests. To those who seek to address the morass of development failure, vitriolic attacks on immigrants, or sanguine views about migrant agency, this volume challenges them to put aside their methodological nationalism and pursue alternative pathways out of the quagmire of poverty, violence, and fear that is enveloping the globe.



Bishnu Barik (ed.): *Gender and Human Rights: Narratives on Macro-Micro Realities*, Rawat Publications (Jaipur, India) 2010 ([link to publisher](#))

The book incorporates voices of women from margins, viz., women in prostitution, queer women, tribal women and minority women, in understanding gendered violence and sex-based discrimination. It attempts to address a range of issues such as dangers of Uniform civil code, debate in a communally charged climate, harassment at workplace and cultures of violence nurtured and legitimized through dress code, sex and job segregations. The discussion goes around the dehumanizing vocabulary used by mainstream for women-in-prostitution and the latter's collective agency in resisting and rejecting this dominant formulation. Violence done to sex workers by combining and confusing sexual rights with reproductive rights is delineated with nuanced understanding. The powerlessness of rural women in making reproductive choices and accessing desired contraception with the naïve health staff interested in mechanical implementation of health programmes and the gross violations of rights of women prisoners are other issues of concern discussed in the book. Several essays take stock of violation of tribal women's rights both within community and through negligence shown by state machineries.



Alejandra G. Lizardi Gómez: *De dolencias y ausencias: La atención a un padecimiento crónico en una comunidad transnacional*, Centro Univeristario del Norte, Universidad de Guadalajara, 2010 ([publisher contact](#))

Comunidades como Yahualica con una migración añeja, han creado las pautas para generar una cultura migratoria y una migración generacional en donde las familias construyen relaciones sociales y culturales en un espacio transnacional. A pesar de la distancia que existe entre las comunidades de origen y destino, estas están estrechamente vinculadas a través del movimiento de gente, bienes e información que trasciende las fronteras físicas. La investigación que ocupa estas páginas es la de una sobre la experiencia de la atención al padecimiento crónico en un contexto transnacional. La atención al padecimiento crónico se refiere a las decisiones y estrategias instrumentadas por los sujetos para hacer frente a la experiencia de vivir con una enfermedad crónica. Esto es, la realización de actividades en la vida diaria para limitar o contrarrestar los efectos del padecimiento; la búsqueda y asistencia a múltiples recursos y estructuras de atención a la enfermedad; el conjunto de medidas tendientes a la prevención de las crisis y el control de los síntomas. *De dolencias y ausencias. La atención a un padecimiento crónico en una comunidad transnacional* nos guía en un recorrido histórico sobre el proceso de migración en Yahualica, presenta las condiciones estructurales de atención a las enfermedades y cómo han evolucionado en la comunidad y población estudiada explicando la conformación de lo que llama “La medicalización transnacionalizada”.



CONFERENCE REPORT Contributed by Jeanette Schade

Environmental Change and Migration: From Vulnerabilities to Capabilities

ESF-ZiF-Bielefeld Research Conference, 5-9 December 2010, Bad Salzuflen, Germany

The conference “Environmental Change and Migration: From Vulnerabilities to Capabilities” was the first of a new conference series on “Environmental Degradation, Conflict and Forced Migration”. It was organised by the European Science Foundation, the Bielefeld University and its Center for Interdisciplinary Research. Jeanette Schade and Thomas Faist from the Bielefeld University’s Center on Migration, Citizenship and Development (COMCAD) organized and chaired the event. The conference focused on how environmental change impacts the nexus between vulnerabilities on the one hand and capabilities on the other hand, and how this relationship affects mobility patterns. It served as a platform to facilitate intensive discussions on open questions and methodological challenges. The researchers invited represented a wide range of disciplines, such as sociology, ethnology, social anthropology, migration, conflict, cultural, gender and development studies, geography, international relations, political science, international law, geology, and climate and environmental science. The conference was well balanced in terms of geographic origin, gender, and academic status of the participants. Climate change figured out prominently among the advanced submissions to the conference. Therefore, it was a stated aim of the organizers to bring together the perspectives from climate change, vulnerability and migration studies, and to draw conclusions about the political implications of the knowledge scientists currently have available. Toward that goal, the conference was structured along three pillars.

The first pillar focused on methods for assessing and anticipating environmental and climate change as well as its impact on vulnerability of affected communities and groups, exemplified with selected case studies.

Presentations included for example talks on (1) the application of the Geographic Information System (GIS) to assess the changing quality of soils and the qualification of an area for relocation measures in terms of environmental security; (2) an introduction to the functioning and the advantages of regional climate modelling for users in need for detailed regional climate change information, including up-to-date information on projections; and (3) qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess social vulnerability to environmental and climate change. Some contributions made an explicit link between the issues of migration and climate change by presenting a new approach to the migration-climate nexus and to the modelling of climate change related migration decisions.

Papers presented in the second pillar concentrated on empirical research on environmentally induced migration. One highlight was the discussion of efforts to overcome the dominant perspective of migration as an expression of vulnerability. It shifted the focus to aspects of capability and the enabling socio-political structures which play a role for mobility in times of environmental crisis. The empirical examples covered all continents as well as different modes of mobility and forced migration. Noteworthy, for example, were studies on (1) the interrelation between the environment, out- and in-migration and ostensibly stable population growth in remote areas of Canada; (2) decreasing mobility of pastoralists and their herds in Ethiopia; and (3) the role of governmental policies for rural-to-urban migration after the catastrophic fires in Russia. The presentations also included an executive summary and conclusions of the EACH-FOR results (Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios, financed by EU-FP6). As

intriguing as each single case study was, however, the approaches used were usually far more influenced by methodologies of vulnerability assessment than by the specific perspectives and insights of migration studies.

The focus of the third pillar was clearly on the political dimensions and challenges of environmentally induced migration. It was particularly captivating with respect to (1) the likely challenges if climate change and imminent displacement are proceeding quasi simultaneously. The analyses presented included the search for policy frames that guarantee carefully decided, planned and implemented resettlement measures (the case of the Carteret Islands, for example, showed the associated difficulties in detail), or as the advancement of existing law to allow for dealing humanely with persons already displaced. (2) The discussion of policies was complemented by reflections on the political and scientific discourses which currently frame the issue in the public sphere, and contributors expressed concern that the securitization of the debate may reinforce public policies driven by fear and resentment which are certainly not in the interest of those affected.

Questions that arose continually and throughout the conference included access to central resources, in particular to land, and the implementation and enforcement of human rights as a means to guard against societal conditions that undermine people's capacities to respond to climate change and other environmental, as well as socioeconomic or political challenges. There was broad consensus that the politics and implementation of human rights have a major role in crafting socio-political solutions that lessen vulnerabilities and enhance capabilities in cases of environmentally enforced migration, and that we have to go beyond purely technical adaptation measures and humanitarian aid. Several contributors

emphasized that much policy analysis already exists, but that the analysis of the politics of climate change and migration has still to be strengthened.

Such insights, however, apply not only to displacement, resettlement and other forms of forced migration, but also to any kind of marginalization and impoverishment. More work has to be done to approach the issue of climate/environmental change more systematically from the vantage point of migration studies. The use of typologies, such as "circular" vs. "long-term" or "voluntary" vs. "impelled" and "forced" migration falls short of constituting a specific migration theory-based approach to the subject. Until now there have been only few attempts to develop such a perspective. One way ahead, is to consider more explicitly macro level phenomena, i.e. the impact of climate/environmental change on existing migration flows and their underlying conditions. The other is to look at the micro level, i.e. at migration decisions with regard to climate/environmental change and approaches to modelling them. Attempts to both approaches were presented. But what has not yet been studied is the nexus to the meso-level, i.e. the role of social networks and intermediate institutions in facilitating climate/environmentally induced migration and the degree to which those social structures and relations are vulnerable to climate/environmental change.

Individual contributions to the conference can soon be downloaded as working papers of the newly issued COMCAD Series on Environmental Degradation and Migration at [www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(en\)/tdrc/ag_comcad/publication/wp.html](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/tdrc/ag_comcad/publication/wp.html). For more information on the conference please visit www.esf.org/conferences/10328 or contact Jeanette Schade (jeanette.schade@uni-bielefeld.de).

CALLS FOR PAPERS

The **8th Annual IMISCOE Conference** will be hosted by IMISCOE partner **CMR** (Centre of Migration Research), Warsaw University, Poland. 8–10 September 2011. More details will be published soon at the IMISCOE [web site](#).

The *Journal of Social Research and Policy* invites papers for a special issue on **Migration and Happiness**, guest editor David Bartram (University of Leicester). Deadline for submission **31 August 2011**. More details [here](#).

ISA Forum, Buenos Aires: Call for Sessions

The next ISA Forum of Sociology will take place **August 1st–4th 2012** in Buenos Aires. In planning for RC31 activities at this event, the first step is to invite members to propose *sessions* that they would like to organize. (We're not looking for papers yet, only proposals for sessions.)

The Forum theme is "Social Justice and Democratization"; before sending a proposal, please consult the [ISA web page](#) describing the event. A proposal should consist of session title, a brief summary/description, and your name, email address and affiliation (and those of any co-organizers).

We are entitled (on the basis of RC31 membership figures) to a total of 18 sessions (including the business meeting). Proposals will be evaluated by the board; sessions that connect to the Forum theme might receive a degree of priority, but of course the more general criteria include overall intellectual coherence and it is possible that sessions without a direct connection to the theme will nonetheless be valuable parts of our program.

The deadline for proposing a session is **15 June 2011**. Please send proposals by email to David Bartram at d.bartram@le.ac.uk; after the board makes its selection you will hear the result by 15 July. Those who want to offer papers for selected sessions will then be instructed to contact you directly and the decision on papers will be yours to make.

We look forward to hearing from you.

POST-DOCTORAL OPENING

Two-year position in **Migration and Ethnic Studies** with a focus on IT, globalisation and labour market changes at **Linköping University**. The position is located within the Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO) at the Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Campus Norrköping, Linköping University, Sweden. Position starts no later than 1 September 2011; deadline for applications **31 March 2011**. More details available [here](#).

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN MEMORIAM MICHAEL BOMMES

With great sadness, we learned that **Michael Bommes** passed away on 26 December 2010. Michael was a leading man and guiding figure in the field of migration studies, notably within Germany. Michael was one of the key figures in the preparation and establishment of both the IMISCOE Network of Excellence and the IMISCOE Research Network. IMISCOE will miss Michael. For an extended reflection, please visit the [IMISCOE web site](#).

Applications are now sought for the **MPhil in Race, Ethnicity, Conflict** - Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin. Rolling application deadline from **10 November 2010 to 30 June 2011**. For further information, please visit the [course website](#) and/or contact: Dr Ronit Lentin, Course coordinator, tel: +353 1 8962702, email: rlentin@tcd.ie.

RECENT ARTICLES

Ivan Light

“Federal/State Cost Sharing of Immigrant Welfare.” *California Journal of Politics and Policy* (2010): vol. 2, no. 1, Article 19. (article available [here](#)). An op-ed based on this article appeared in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) on 12 January 2011.

Caroline Plüss

2010. “Baghdadi Jews in early colonial Hong Kong: Social capital and converting cultural, social and economic resources in trans-regional networks under conditions of globalization”, *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs*, vol. 11, no. 1 (article available [here](#))

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Visit the [RC-31 web site](#).

MEMBERSHIP dues are \$20 for a four-year period: to join, visit the ISA web site [here](#).

SUBMIT YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS!

(Not only announcements – there is also scope for longer pieces in the form of op-eds, etc.)

Send submissions for the next issue to David Bartram, d.bartram@le.ac.uk