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On: 22 November 2011, At: 02:26
Publisher: Routledge
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UK



Ethnic and Racial Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rers20>

THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS: A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Available online: 21 Oct 2011

To cite this article: Outi Luova (2011): THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS: A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, Ethnic and Racial Studies, DOI:10.1080/01419870.2011.623134

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.623134>



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BOOK REVIEW

Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser and Peter Kivisto (eds), **THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS: A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, xiv + 228 pp., £55.00 (hard)

A third wave of research on the nexus between migration and development has gained momentum. The two main characteristics of this third phase are its focus on the transnational ties that migrants maintain and the aspect of co-development through NGOs – in contrast to earlier emphasis on remittances and return (1950s–1960s) and poverty and the brain drain (1970s–1980s). The edited volume *The Migration-Development Nexus* is a much-awaited publication that critically draws the strands of the discussion since the 1950s and provides state-of-the-art studies on focal issues that have been neglected in the previous research. The publication does not attempt to form a unified approach and voice but tries to provide alternative readings and novel approaches to current discussions. The main themes of the book are macro-structural factors and paradigms as well as transnational migrants' engagement with various actors on the local, national and global level.

The book's authors take a critical approach to the current contradictory hype around migrants, partly promoted by global actors such as the World Bank that depict migrants as 'heroes of development', while at the same time these institutions neglect the fact that migrants are increasingly marginalized in their host countries and they are denied the right to move across borders. Another conception that the publication wants to re-evaluate is the idea that migration inevitably brings development.

The volume is organized into three parts. The first part challenges the readers to rethink the basic methodological and conceptual aspects of the migration-development nexus. Nina Glick Schiller calls for a 'global power perspective' that requires an analysis of migrant transfers in the frame of neoliberal restructuring of the economy. This would entail a non-nationalist methodology that is not constrained by the borders of the nation-state and neither ethnic nor cultural categorization. Raúl Delgado Wise and Humberto Márquez Covarrubias maintain that international migration mainly contributes to the development of the rich North. Although migrants send remittances home, these financial transfers may provide an easy excuse for local governments to withdraw from their responsibilities to promote social and economic development.

The four chapters in part two present novel approaches to how migrants and their associations situate themselves within the changing landscape of opportunities. Nicholas Van Hear's chapter uses Tamils, Somalis and Afghans as cases to analyse how diaspora transfers can reach and influence conflict-ridden societies. He regards them as important means to alleviate suffering and sustain life, to help in conflict-resolution, and to support reconstruction in a post-conflict situation. Lothar Smith focuses on the entrepreneurial networks of transnational Ghanaian migrants. His study on urban Ghana reveals that migrants are not always the principal actors, but rather other urban actors who wish to combine their resources with those of migrants.

Margit Fauser's contribution provides interesting insights into the ways in which local government initiatives in receiving societies shape the engagements of migration organizations. She concludes that Spanish sub-national policies played an important role in the

2 *Book review*

participation of such organizations in migration management and development initiatives. In Jean-Baptiste Meyer's chapter, the focus turns toward Diaspora Knowledge Networks (DKN), and their strengths and weaknesses. He compares the success stories of the Indian and Chinese DKN with less positive examples and ends up suggesting that plurality and the intensity of involvement matter most in the efficiency of the networks.

Unlike many other publications on migration and development, this volume takes a serious look at the concept of development and the role that researchers have in the formulation of related paradigms and policies. In the third part, the chapters by Thomas Faist and Peter Kivisto clarify the overall historico-political context of the academic field and reconsider the central arenas and roles of academic activities. Faist suggests that the strongest impact of social scientists is beyond consultancy and policy-recommendation, in the public sphere. One dimension that the reader might miss is a more frequent inclusion of Asian experiences in the analysis. The book relies largely on evidence from America, Europe and Africa.

In conclusion, the publication is a timely intervention into current debates and highly recommended for researchers, civil servants and civil society activists who are interested in transnational migration in general and the linkages between migration and development in particular. The book deserves a wide readership and it hopefully makes a substantial impact in the public sphere.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.623134>