

---

# Contents

---

<i>List of contributors</i>	vii
Introduction <i>Guglielmo Meardi</i>	1
PART I MIGRATION AND LABOUR MARKETS	
1 Supply factors: demography, economy and skills <i>Giammarco Alderotti and Gustavo De Santis</i>	14
2 Demand factors: demography, economy and innovation <i>Anne Green</i>	27
3 Employment effects: replacement, substitution, complementarity and segmentation <i>Ivana Fellini</i>	42
4 Migrant segregation and labour standards <i>Guglielmo Meardi</i>	62
5 The unsettling nature of immigration: labour migration, racism, and discrimination <i>Patrick McGovern</i>	76
PART II MIGRATION: THE ACTORS	
6 Employer strategies and migration <i>Chris Forde, Zinovijus Ciupijus, Gabriella Alberti, Marketa Dolezalova, Jiachen Shi, Ioulia Bessa, Jo Cutter, Meenakshi Sarkar and Robert MacKenzie</i>	90
7 Migrant diversity: introducing the migrant diversity category to diversity management <i>Mustafa F. Özbilgin, Cihat Erbil and Angela Dipalma</i>	109
8 Institutional agencies: the new institutional foundations of the globalised labour force <i>Stuart Rosewarne</i>	122
9 Migrant business: the rise of new migrant business in Britain and beyond <i>Trevor Jones and Monder Ram</i>	137
10 Trade unions and migrant workers: the challenges of inclusion <i>Stefania Marino, Heather Connolly and Miguel Martínez Lucio</i>	152

PART III SECTORAL PERSPECTIVES

11	Migrant workers in the care sector <i>Reiko Ogawa</i>	168
12	Migrant workers in construction <i>Lorenzo Frangi and Gerhard Bosch</i>	182
13	Migrant workers in manufacturing <i>Benjamin Hopkins</i>	199
14	Migrant workers in agriculture <i>Philip Martin</i>	213

PART IV REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

15	Europe: the EU regulation of migration <i>Petra Herzfeld Olsson and Zvezda Vankova</i>	233
16	Labour migration in the Americas <i>Rafael Bohlen and Ludger Pries</i>	250
17	Labour migration in Africa <i>Leander Kandilige, Gorrety Yogo and Linda A. Oucho</i>	269

PART V REGULATION AND POLITICS

18	Comparative labour migration policies <i>Camilla Devitt</i>	290
19	The global governance of labour migration and seasonal workers <i>Daniela Comandé and Federico Siotto</i>	309
20	The political, fiscal and economic effects of immigration on welfare states <i>Alexandre Afonso, Emily Wolff and Samir Negash</i>	324
21	Unpacking (ir)regular labour migration <i>Anders Neergaard and Niklas Selberg</i>	338
	<i>Index</i>	359

---

# Introduction

*Guglielmo Meardi*

---

## INTRODUCTION: STUDYING MIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT

This Handbook's aim is, by presenting the state of the art on some of the core issues through a global and diverse team of authors, to integrate the fields of migration and employment studies in a systematic and interdisciplinary way. The amount of research on migration and employment is growing very fast – and yet it is still largely fragmented between regional and disciplinary perspectives.

Migration studies have been one of the fastest growing fields in the social sciences since the late twentieth century, with a proliferation in the number of journals, teaching programs, scholarly associations and networks (Levy et al. 2020; Scholten et al. 2022). IMISCOE, the International Migration Research Network – now very well established – was created only in 2005. Of course, the mobility of labour has attracted the interest of social scientists since the very beginning: observations can be found in all classic works, from the positive evaluations by Adam Smith, to the concerns of Karl Marx, and some early sociologists (W.E.B. Du Bois, Georg Simmel, W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki) were particularly absorbed by the social roles and conditions of migrants as a critical aspect of modern societies. Yet around the globe during most of the twentieth century, migration was a niche field of interest rather than a central one. Now that it is one of the most studied subjects, it is apparent that many of the studies do not include an employment focus (Levy et al. 2020). This contrasts with the fact that the large majority of migrants worldwide (around 70 per cent according to the ILO: ILO 2021) are in employment, and work (including via free movement of workers) remains the most frequent channel of migration compared to family reunion and humanitarian reasons (even considering that the distinction between motivations is often blurred) (OECD 2023). Most migrants spend most of their active time at work, and their work position dramatically affects their life chances and social integration. Equally important is the fact that migrants' labour force participation is, in the aggregate, higher than that of those within local populations (69 per cent against 60.4 per cent in 2019, according to the ILO (2021)). Migrants are, therefore, a group for whom employment is particularly important, and they make a positive contribution to the labour force worldwide.

From another perspective, employment has been one of the central concerns of social sciences in the twentieth century, but with only passing attention to migration. Labour law, industrial relations, employment and social policies, labour movements, have all developed largely along national lines. Migrants have always been important (e.g., in labour movements, think for instance of in Northern and Southern America) but they rarely attracted in-depth attention. As a result, the mainstream economics of migration applies to migrants the laws of supply and demands with little concern with the specific social determinants and social consequences of human mobility. This has been changing with the increased pace of internationalisation of research. Migration challenges some tenets of labour economics, such as actors' motivations and utility functions, but also of industrial relations and labour politics and

their concerns with the control of labour supply. In particular, migrants are a boundary case for theories of the state and thereby of the welfare state, such as the link between boundaries, citizenship and welfare policy proposed by Rokkan (Flora et al. 1999). Only recently, though, employment studies, including industrial relations, have started taking as central, rather than as marginal, issues of migration, as well as race and ethnicity (e.g., Lee and Tapia 2021).

The need for more integrated, nuanced studies of labour migration is best revealed by the polarisation of views about the costs and benefits of migration, which appear as inherently incomplete. On one side, optimistic views of migration as an efficient, optimising reallocation of labour and resources can be found from both free-market thinkers and advocates of cosmopolitan citizenship, while opposition to feared adverse effects of open borders are present both on the Right and within some labour movements. The missing element in such opposition is the regulation of the labour market: the market of a ‘fictitious commodity’ (Polanyi), which, more so than any other market, requires regulations and social norms and cannot function on the basis of contract alone (for a recent discussion, see Dukes and Streeck 2022). Mutual learning between employment and migration studies can be very fruitful: by elaborating critiques of economic models of the labour market (McGovern 2007), examining the roles of associations – besides that of individuals and families, which used to be the exclusive focus of studies of migration processes (e.g., Milkman 2020; Marino et al. 2017) – unveiling conflicts and contradictions beyond the dichotomy of structural and subjective models of the labour market, and turning the attention to a variety of institutions, including for instance, temporary work agencies. Methodologically, also, there is much potential in synergies between some methods developed in migration studies (especially the transnational ones, but also, for instance, the use of correspondence and attention to positionality) and some methods developed in employment studies, from sociolegal analysis of labour law, to the tradition of both quantitative and qualitative workplace studies.

At a time when labour migration is as salient as ever, this integrated Handbook can help to build common ground, by clarifying emerging aspects and pointing at future directions of research. This work starts by making some core concepts clearer.

## MIGRATION STUDIES AND EMPLOYMENT

This Handbook deals with migration, primarily international migration. Internal migration is also of massive importance, especially in some parts of the world (China is a well-known example), yet it is more diversified and does not involve some specific issues that international migration raises – starting from the fact that its governance escapes the control of the national state.

International migration is itself, however, a complex concept to define. According to the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of Migrants (1990), a migrant is ‘a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national’. Many international organisations, and statistical sources, add a temporary criterion of a minimum of one year, as in the case of the EU: ‘Immigration is the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a different state for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months’ (EC Regulation 862/2007). This, however, leaves aside many forms of short-term mobility which can be associated with specific problems (see Chapter 19).

Migration status is not a binary characteristic: definitions vary, between ‘foreign-born’ and ‘foreign nationals’ and, as the case of ‘expats’ shows, not all foreign workers are considered migrants. The status of migrant workers includes a spectrum of immigration regulations: free movement, permanent residence, temporary permits, residence without right to work, and unauthorised migration (Chapter 21 in this Handbook). Labour force surveys do not generally allow for granular consideration of migration status, and often it is only possible to distinguish between national and non-nationals, or between born in the country and born abroad. These two distinctions are not the same, and neither grasps the process of migration precisely: non-nationals may have been born in the country (and therefore never immigrated), while foreign-born citizens may be national who happened to have been born abroad. This imprecision matters in international comparisons, because naturalisation rules, and therefore the number of immigrants who stop being counted as ‘foreign nationals’, vary significantly country by country, as does the size of ‘diasporas’ and nationals born abroad. Older immigrants tend to become nationals in countries with liberal naturalisation regimes, but keep being counted as foreigners in others. Similarly, there are many ‘foreign born’ who are citizens in the host post-colonial countries such as France and the UK, as well as in other cases, such as the high number of Latin Americans who acquire Italian citizenship on the grounds of ancestry when moving to Europe.

Migrants’ employment tends to display a bimodal distribution in terms of skills: they are more frequently found in low-skilled and high-skilled jobs, although the distribution between the two can vary significantly country by country (Friedberg and Hunt 1995). This distribution does not correspond necessarily to that of migrants’ own skills, given that often migrants’ qualifications are not formally recognised or effectively valued in the host countries: a phenomenon that has been called ‘skill (or brain) waste’ (Mattoo et al. 2008). High-skilled migrants raise some important issues, from ‘brain drain’ to innovation policies, and are considered in this Handbook (especially in Chapter 2), but it is migration into low-skilled jobs that attracts most social concern and that is paid most attention to in this Handbook: labour standards, formal and informal discrimination and exploitation, and emerging forms of representation.

Increasingly, migrants are seen as having ‘agency’ (Königter and Smith 2015; Mainwaring 2016): the capability, of a distinctive transnational kind, to contest and resist controls and borders. Their ‘agency’, as more generally in the social sciences, can be conceptualised in very different ways. The first one is visible in the ‘autonomy of migration’ thesis: migrants’ agency in crossing borders is a way of defying them (Mezzadra and Nielson 2013). It can be an individual capacity to play, escape or manipulate rules in the pursuit of personal interest, or as a collective political contestation of the rules themselves. The literature often blurs the analytical distinction between the two, but whilst in reality both aspects can co-exist in the same situations, the underlying ideas are quite different. The first conceptualisation is essentially based on rational choice action and is used most clearly by those who contest the idea of migrants as victims by stressing the lack of resources they have, compared to non-migrants. While in some cases this attention to individual agency is linked to theoretical opposition to borders, the more frequent implication is that, faced with such manipulative agency, regulations have to be stricter and smarter, as for instance in Streeck’s (2017) consideration of migrants as ‘strategic actors’. The limitation of such a perspective is that, by contesting simplistic representations of migrants as ‘victims’, it downplays the structural inequalities in resources and power. The other view is focused on collective action and sees agency as inherently political, that is, not just a form of ‘exit’ but also of ‘voice’, even if often in informal or pre-political. For instance,

a frequent inspiration here comes from Hardt and Negri's (2014) view in *Multitude* that migrants actively search for freedom and can be the 'salt of the earth' in contesting imperialism. Much research on migrants' collective agency stresses the point that mobilisation can occur even among the most exploited and marginalised people, such as 'irregular' migrants, and can also have a transformative impact, as in the case of the 'Dreamers' movement in the USA (for a review, see Ambrosini and Hajer 2023). Yet that mobilisation *can* occur, even among the most oppressed, has been known at least since the times of slaves' revolts: the empirical question is when and how this can occur and with what effect. Without such an empirical assessment of migrant mobilisation resources, forms, conditions and effects, the risk is romanticising specific events and overlooking how often migrants do not have opportunities for political agency or their political agency is repressed. Hence, whichever the concept of agency that is used, there is the need for considering both agency and structure (Bakewell 2010). This is another instance where reflecting on parallelism with employment studies can be useful: also, worker resistance, while frequent, is a complex phenomenon, which can be individual or collective, and which should not be romanticised given employers' frequent capacity to circumvent it and the 'futility' of some of its manifestations.

## EMPLOYMENT STUDIES AND MIGRATION

The conventional economic view of migration sees international mobility driven by supply and demand forces. The most systematic attempt to frame it in this way comes from Borjas' (2014) economics of migration approach to analysing migrants' costs and benefits analysis. Seen in this perspective, migration should contribute to international wage convergence and lead the global labour market towards an equilibrium. Several problems have been raised on such an approach, both conceptually and empirically. It has been noticed that to the extent that cost-benefit analysis explains migrant flows, it fails to satisfactorily explain why the huge majority of people *do not* migrate: the migration choice is generally a cumulative one, and therefore a particularly socially bounded one, rather than an atomistic, utilitarian decision that could be easily modelled in economic terms. Hence, there are a number of paradoxes. Migration between Mexico and the USA has been historically unaffected by macroeconomic factors, leading the 'new economics of migration' approach to stress the role of 'relative deprivation' of families with no migrants compared with families with migrants (Massey and Espinosa 1997). Contrary to what neoclassical economics would predict, a relative increase in economic development tends to increase rather than decrease emigration, because even if it reduces the absolute economic gaps between countries of origin and destination, it also increases international contacts, aspirations, and capabilities (Massey et al. 1993).

The long empirical and methodological disputes on the so-called 'Marielitos', that is on the economic effects of a shock of Cuban immigration on the labour market of Miami, has crystallised the opposition between neoclassical and 'new' economics of migration (Card 1990; Borjas 2017; Peri and Yasenov 2019): does the supply of migrant labour depress wages or, counterintuitively, provide more opportunities and improve local incomes? When in 2007 the US Council of Economic Advisers' Chairman Edward P. Lazear declared that 'our review of economic research finds immigrants not only help fuel the Nation's economic growth, but also have an overall positive effect on the income of native-born workers', the latter view had

become the most authoritative, something that was confirmed in 2021 with the award of the Nobel Memorial Prize to David Card.

If any negative effect on wages from immigration is found by researchers, it is generally limited to the lowest wages (Friedberg and Hunt 1995). Recently this has been the established finding with regard to the labour market effects of immigration in the UK – a particularly salient issue around the time of the EU Referendum: the negative effects on wages were only at the lowest end and they were marginal (MAC 2018). This finding leads to a very important implication: if the negative effect is not general and it is marginal, labour market policy should have the capacity to mitigate it. In the 2000s, high levels of immigration had some negative effects on wages in the UK manufacturing sector, but none in the healthcare sector: as a big difference between the two is that the latter was subject to supportive public policy via funding, skill policy and collective bargaining, while the former was left in a decentralised, uncoordinated state (Ruhs and Anderson 2012).

Hence, an important task for research on migration and employment is to consider both migration regulation and labour market regulation: the catchword of ‘migration control’, usually used in relation to the number of migrants allowed in, can acquire a totally different meaning ‘control of migrants’ working conditions’. The consideration of the two allows to overcome the polarised migration debate between ‘free’ and ‘controlled’ migration. These two positions show parallel inconsistencies. The first one is inconsistent with the need for regulation of the market – in particular, a market with such important social dimensions as the labour market. The second is inconsistent with other freedoms of movement that are often invoked and rarely criticised, notably the one of goods and capital. It is equally contradictory for the Left to demand unfettered mobility of labour, as for the Right to demand its control. A nuanced revision of the idea of ‘control’ can advance the debate in a way that is clearer analytically and more effective politically.

While migration policies have the commonality that they tend to fail, it is paradoxically because they are about migration (Castles 2004, 2019). This is not the case for employment policies, which may be effective. The combination of the two is still an understudied question. Regulating entries while liberalising the labour market can lead to a particularly vulnerable status for migrant workers, especially those on temporary permits linked to specific employers, or those who find themselves without the required documents for work. Yet open borders also can make the enforcement of labour rights more difficult: according to Ruhs (2013) there is a trade-off between border openness and human rights that can be granted to migrants, although policies can be devised to try maximising both as far as possible.

The values of order, safety and security that are behind demands for immigration controls sustain also employment regulations. As employment is a constant concern in immigration debates, the interaction between the two is potentially innovative. In the run-up to the EU Referendum in the UK, for instance, job shortages and ‘work and employment’ were prominent issues that drove the debate on migration and eventually decided the vote (Duffy and Frere-Smith 2014). The hidden link had become apparent already in the case of the informal strikes in Northern England in 2009 against foreign contractors at engineering construction sites: the ‘British jobs for British workers’ slogan, initially described as simply xenophobic, appeared, at a closer analysis, driven by concerns with the opacity of working conditions of foreign posted workers in a sector still covered by comprehensive multi-employer collective bargaining (Meardi 2012). The fact that the rapid growth of immigration in the UK (but also in other EU countries: see Raess and Burgoon 2015) since 2004 occurred in parallel with the

rise of hyper-flexible forms of employment such as ‘zero-hour’ contracts, agency work and dependent self-employment (Rolfe and Hudson-Sharp 2016; McCollum and Findlay 2015), suggests that the ‘loss of control’ experienced by native low-paid workers is not so much, or just, on migration in abstract terms, but very concretely on their own working life: working time, employment security, terms and conditions, organisation, social security. Addressing the latter concerns can then be instrumental to addressing the need for ‘migration control’. The case of the strict labour market regulations introduced in Norway and Switzerland alongside free movement of workers from the EU are an example of how public concerns can be addressed more successfully through controls in the workplace than controls at the borders (Meardi 2017).

Socio-economic studies on migration and employment have also addressed the evolution of migrants’ wages and labour market trajectories over time, identifying specificities of different ethnic groups (Chiswick 2001; Villarreal and Tamborini 2018; Waldinger and Catron 2016) and their contributions to productivity, which appear to be positive (Ortega and Peri 2014; Boubtane et al. 2016). These streams of research have important policy implications but represent only a part of research on labour migration. Much of migrants’ experiences cannot be understood only with economic data. For instance, complex social, ethnic, and gender relations shape low-paid migrants’ survival strategies, which would not be grasped through individual earning data (Datta et al. 2007).

Integrating economic data with in-depth observations is not only useful to provide more nuance but also to open up a different interpretive perspective. In merely economic terms, migrant workers are assumed to be those who benefit from mobility, because if they were not, they would not move. The fallacy of inferring preferences from behaviour was revealed in the case of migration by the seminal works of French-Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad (2004), who noticed that much of migrants’ suffering in the host country is ‘silent’: it cannot be expressed because of the stigma that failings in the migration project has happened both in the receiving society and in the one of origin (e.g., family). Sayad’s work is an excellent example of how the perspective of sending countries, and of *emigration*, is an indispensable complement for the hitherto dominant receiving country perspective of studying *immigration*. The hidden, non-monetary suffering of migrants has been highlighted by other streams of studies, such as those on the care chain and on family separations (Hochschild 2004; Parreñas 2015; Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2012).

The idea itself of analysing migration as an interaction of supply and demand overlooks the fact that in the labour market, more than elsewhere, the two are co-constructed: it is possible for supply to generate demand, and vice versa. Migration provides many clear examples: incoming ethnic groups are able to create previously inexistent demand for services they specialise on, for example, in care work; and overall immigration increases demand, in particular on housing. On the other side, employer demand for workers has been crucial in opening ever new channels for migrant labour supply, for example, in the case of work agencies and a whole ‘migration industry’. Moreover, demand and supply of labour do not meet in an atomistic market, but are channelled through power relations that are also political and influenced by collective actors. On all these social and political variables, the contribution of researchers of employment (from industrial relations, to labour law, to institutional economists) remains crucial, but also increasingly needs the input from experts of migration.



## THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this Handbook cannot be to provide an exhaustive review of the huge, diverse field of research on migration and employment. It is, more realistically, to respond to the need for more synergies between the analytical tools of migration and employment studies that has been highlighted in this introduction. To do so, the main specificities of its content are the multidisciplinary and the global reach.

In terms of disciplines, the Handbook includes contributions from sociologists, geographers, demographers, labour lawyers, political scientists, organisation scholars and industrial relations specialists. Some of them have been migration studies specialists for a long time, but not all, in order to expand the boundaries and the analytical tools and to include new perspectives. The contributions are written in styles and approaches that foster mutual learning and dialogue, with the intention to maximise complementarity. An important feature of the chapters is that all conclude with outlines for further research: this is a handbook that does not close any issue, but that tries to open many in the clearest and most operational way.

In terms of global reach, contributors come from all continents, from the Americas, Europe and Australia (the regions where labour migration has been studied for the longest time) to Africa and Asia where much new research is emerging. In many cases the regional focus is explicit and motivated by the specific issues that are covered, but it is still embedded in a more global perspective. The regional focus is not a national one: the approaches are transnational and the discussions grounded in cross-national research and collaboration.

The Handbook is divided into five sections: migration and labour markets; the actors; sectoral perspectives; regional perspectives; regulation and politics.

The first section starts from the classic supply and demand, and problematises both. Supply factors are discussed by demographers Alderotti and De Santis, who, on the basis of a systematic review of recent and historical data, estimate ‘push factors’ to increase for the next decades: an important reference to dismiss the illusion that migration can somehow be stopped or avoided. The demand factors (demography, economy and technological innovation) are discussed by geographer Green, who problematises both the often-invoked concept of ‘skill shortage’ and employers’ strategies. In this chapter, high-skill migration is also covered, as it is often complementary to the low-skill one, something that is relevant for the policies of countries that hope to attract the former without the latter. The scope for alternative employer strategies is also discussed, highlighting that importing labour and skills is never the only option. Three further chapters by sociologists look at what happens to migrants within the host societies’ labour markets. The third one, by economic sociologist Fellini, analyses the employment effects of immigration, problematising some of the issues mentioned in this introduction and distinguishing between replacement, substitution, complementarity and segmentation. International data are used to show that these different effects vary in relation to the structure of the host country labour markets. The following chapter by the labour sociologist editor of the Handbook, looks more in depth at one frequently observed and particularly problematic aspects of migrants’ labour market position, that is, segregation. It discusses its possible political, economic and organisational explanations – all pointing to the fact that the labour market position of migrants is the result of particular power relations. Finally, a chapter by migration sociologist McGovern discusses a related problematic issue, the one of discrimination. Here, theories of racism are assessed, distinguishing different approaches and reaching a sobering conclusion about the difficulty of ‘grand theories’ on the subject.

If the first part is about structures, it frequently mentions the importance of actors (employers, migrant families, anti-racist movements, etc.), the second part looks in more depth at the most important ones: employers, HR professionals, institutional agencies, ethnic businesses, and trade unions. The employers are covered in a chapter by Forde and colleagues, a team of mostly UK-based employment relations scholars who could write from the privileged observatory of post-Brexit Britain, where employers had to adapt to a changing institutional environment, but also contributed to shaping it. Drawing on a vast range of empirical and theoretical sources, they provide a multi-level analytical grid that can be used for further research. The following chapter is more precisely on HR professionals and on one important policy introduced into HRM in recent decades, i.e., diversity management. Özbilgin and colleagues, scholars of organisation and management, identify a number of problematic areas within the discourse and practice of diversity management and the inclusion of migration within it, and in particular the fact that ethnic diversity issues risk overshadowing the specificities of migration and refugee status. The following chapter, by political economist Rosewarne, looks at an emerging and still understudied category of actors, that is, public and private institutions, and in particular at the problematic rise of for-profit market intermediaries. A further important but not sufficiently studied actor is covered in Chapter 9 by Jones and Ram: ethnic entrepreneurs. The factors determining their segregation, which are analysed in detail drawing on the rich experience of the UK, play a significant role in the establishment of ethnic niches in the labour market and for migration flows. The section is concluded by a chapter on organisations acting for the labour side, that is, trade unions. Marino and colleagues, industrial relations specialists, outline the factors shaping unions' strategies towards migrant workers, and in particular different kinds of inclusion, and explain their variations.

The third section presents sectoral perspectives. The economic sector is hugely important for the reality of employment, and this is visible also for labour migration. The section covers some critical sectors: care, construction, manufacturing and agriculture. The chapter on care, by migration scholar Reiko Ogawa, explores the important intersections between migration and gender and the importance, for the quality of both care provision and migrants' working conditions, of different models of care provision: an immensely important policy issue in ageing societies. The chapter on construction, by labour market and industrial relations experts Frangi and Bosch, highlights the specificities of a sector that is based on worker mobility and is prone to segmentation and segregation. This, however, does not involve a sector or technological determinism: the chapter shows the factors at the macro, meso and micro level that can affect the regulation of migrant work in the industry. The following chapter, by industrial relations scholar Hopkins, is on a wider sector, that is, manufacturing as a whole: a setting characterised by manual labour at different skill levels and, unlike care and construction, increasing levels of automation as a labour shredding strategy. After a review of the evolution of labour migration in manufacturing, the chapter looks more in depth into a critical sector, food production, where the use and the segmentation of migrant labour is particularly visible. The final chapter of this section is on agriculture, by agriculture economist Martin. Here, the issue of migrant labour degradation is intertwined with the one of environmental degradation. The chapter draws especially on the USA experience, where the industrialisation of agriculture has advanced alongside an increased use of migrant labour, to then compare it with other parts of the globe.

The fourth part is on regional perspectives. The section is not exhaustive in covering all continents, but provides chapters on three different continents that, taken together, show how

migration is mostly regional both in flows and in regulatory regimes, and combine perspectives from the ‘global North’ and the ‘global South’. The chapter on Europe, by Herzfeld Olsson and Vankova, analyses the EU regulation system of migration. This is a unique system, combining internal free movement with external selective barriers, that attracts attention worldwide. The authors highlight its weaknesses and contradictions, especially with regard to the equal treatment of third country nationals, and point at its evolution of a sectoral approach. The chapter on the Americas, covering both North and South, by sociologists Bohlen and Pries, describes a continent marked by deep inequalities and with a long history of labour migration, as well as a complex layering of formal and informal institutions and practices. Finally, the chapter on Africa by migration researchers Kandlinge and colleagues unveils the important regulatory attempts in a continent that is frequently perceived as simply a migrant-sending one with a growing ‘reserve army’ of labour, but actually has important internal migration flows that remain understudied.

The final section of the Handbook is on regulations and politics, and aims to provide contributions for both theory and policy. This part is opened by a chapter by sociologist Devitt that maps national migration policies and identifies the multiple factors that shape them. The following chapter, by labour lawyers Siotto and Comandè, instead looks at the global level, highlighting the principles of international and European law on labour migration and on seasonal work. The chapter stresses the weakness of many international regulations, and in combination with the previous chapter, shows clearly the mismatch between the transnational nature of migration, and the predominantly national nature of the main regulations. The subsequent contribution, by political scientist Afonso and colleagues, is on the sensitive issue of the welfare state: much public debate on migration is around allegations of undeserving welfare dependence, but a systematic overview of the evidence shows that the relationship between migration and welfare states is more complex, bidirectional and multifaceted. The final chapter is on a very important aspect that needs to be taken into account in any discussion of regulations: irregularity. Migration scholars Neergaard and Selberg provide an elaborate critique of the concept of ‘irregular labour migration’, distinguishing between different situations and showing how they correspond to power structures.

The Handbook as a whole has some limitations. Besides not covering all sectors and all continents with specialist chapters, there are important issues that are not put in evidence in their own chapters. The gender dimension is one: it is ‘mainstreamed’ across many chapters, and in a way, it is so important that it has already deserved the attention of specific reference books (Oso and Ribas-Mateos 2013; Mora and Piper 2021; Christou and Kofman 2022). Public opinion, modern slavery, migrant mobilisation, networks, occupational health and several more issues are touched upon, but do not have their own chapters. Yet, a handbook is a limited piece of work, and migration, almost by definition, will always cross its boundaries.

This Handbook was largely planned and written during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the drafting, the authors managed to meet mostly only via online discussions, and not, as initially planned, around the globe in more humanely friendly settings. The Editor is therefore particularly grateful for the efforts that every single author has made. During the pandemic, it also seemed that some turning point was being reached on international mobility, to the point that several authors had planned to include more systematic discussions of it. From 2022 onwards, it appeared that the world was going back to its previous business as usual, with resuming migration flows, enduring exploitation, and renowned political speculation around it. And yet the short ‘Covid moment’, when the world realised its collective interdependence

(Crouch 2022), showed that there can be more attention to the reality of migrant labour: its essential functions, its value, its conditions, and the pressing ethical imperatives around it. The aspiration of this Handbook is to make at least a small contribution to that scientific and ethical attention.

## REFERENCES

- Ambrosini, M. and M.H. Hajer (2023), *Irregular Migration: IMISCOE Short Reader*, Cham: Springer.
- Bakewell, O. (2010), 'Some reflections on structure and agency in migration theory', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, **36** (10), 1689–1708.
- Borjas, G.J. (2014), *Immigration Economics*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Borjas, G.J. (2017), 'The wage impact of the Marielitos: A reappraisal', *ILR Review*, **70** (5), 1077–1110.
- Boubtane, E., J.C. Dumont and C. Rault (2016), 'Immigration and economic growth in the OECD countries 1986–2006', *Oxford Economic Papers*, **68** (2), 340–360.
- Card, D. (1990), 'The impact of the Mariel boatlift on the Miami labor market', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, **43** (2), 245–257.
- Castles, S. (2004), 'The factors that make and unmake migration policies', *International Migration Review*, **38**, 852–884.
- Castles, S. (2019), 'Why migration policies fail', in M. Bulmer and J. Solomos (eds), *Celebrating 40 Years of Ethnic and Racial Studies*, London, Routledge, 300–320.
- Chiswick, B.R. (2001), 'The effect of Americanization on the earnings of foreign-born men', in M. Suárez-Orozco, C. Suárez-Orozco and D. Qin-Hilliard (eds), *The New Immigrant in the American Economy*, London, Routledge, 111–136.
- Christou, A. and E. Kofman (2022), *Gender and Migration*, New York: Springer.
- Crouch, C. (2022), 'Reflections on the COVID moment and life beyond neoliberalism', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, **28** (1), 31–45.
- Datta, K., C. McIlwaine, Y. Evans, J. Herbert, J. May and J. Wills (2007), 'From coping strategies to tactics: London's low-pay economy and migrant labour', *British journal of industrial relations* **45** (2), 404–432.
- Duffy, B. and T. Frere-Smith (2014), *Perceptions and Reality. Public Attitudes to Immigration*. Ipsos MORI.
- Dukes, D. and W. Streeck (2022), *Democracy at Work: Contract, Status and Post-Industrial Justice*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Flora, P., S. Kuhnle and D. Urwin (1999), *State Formation, Nation-building, and Mass Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Friedberg, R.M. and J. Hunt (1995), 'The impact of immigration on host country wages, employment and growth', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, **9**, 23–44.
- Hardt, M. and A. Negri (2004), *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin.
- Hochschild, A.R. (2004), 'Love and gold', in A.R. Hochschild, and B. Ehrenreich (eds), *Global Women: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, New York: Owl Books, 34–46.
- ILO (2021), *Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers Results and Methodology*, Geneva: International Labor Organization.
- Königter, S. and W. Smith (eds) (2015), *Transnational Agency and Migration: Actors, Movements, and Social Support*, London, Routledge.
- Lee, T.L. and M. Tapia (2021), 'Confronting race and other social identity erasures: The case for critical industrial relations theory', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, **74** (3), 637–662.
- Levy, N., A. Pisarevskaya and P. Scholten (2020), 'Between fragmentation and institutionalisation: the rise of migration studies as a research field', *Comparative Migration Studies*, **8**.
- Lutz, H. and E. Palenga-Möllenberg (2012), 'Care workers, care drain, and care chains: Reflections on care, migration, and citizenship', *Social Politics*, **19** (1), 15–37.

- MAC - Migration Advisory Committee (2018) 'EEA Migration in the UK: Final Report', [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/741926/Final\\_EEA\\_report.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741926/Final_EEA_report.PDF)
- Mainwaring, C. (2016) 'Migrant agency: Negotiating borders and migration controls', *Migration Studies*, 4 (3), 289–308.
- Marino, S., J. Roosblad, and R. Penninx (eds) (2017), *Trade Unions and Migrant Workers: New Contexts and Challenges in Europe*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Massey, D.S. and K. E. Espinosa (1997), 'What's driving Mexico-US migration? A theoretical, empirical, and policy analysis', *American Journal of Sociology*, 102 (4), 939–999.
- Massey, D.S., J. Arango, G. Hugo, A. Kouaouci, A. Pellegrino and J.E. Taylor (1993), 'Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal', *Population and Development Review*, 19 (3), 431–466.
- Mattoo, A., I.C. Neagu and Ç. Özden (2008), 'Brain waste? Educated immigrants in the US labor market', *Journal of Development Economics*, 87 (2), 255–269.
- McCollum, D. and A. Findlay (2015), 'Flexible' workers for 'flexible' jobs? The labour market function of A8 migrant labour in the UK, *Work, Employment and Society*, 29 (3), 427–443.
- McGovern, P. (2007) 'Immigration, labour market and employment relations', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 45 (2), 217–35.
- Meardi, G. (2012), 'Union immobility? Trade unions and the freedoms of movement in the enlarged EU', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 50 (1), 99–120
- Meardi, G. (2017), 'What does migration control mean? The link between migration and labour market regulations in Norway, Switzerland and Canada', *Warwick Industrial Relations Paper*, 109.
- Mezzadra, S. and B. Nielson (2013), *Border as method, or, the multiplication of labor*, Durham (NC), Duke University Press.
- Milkman, R. (2020) *Immigrant Labor and the New Precariat*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Mora, C. and N. Piper (eds) (2021), *The Palgrave handbook of gender and migration*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- OECD (2023), *International Migration Outlook*, Geneva: OECD.
- Ortega, F. and G. Peri (2014), 'Openness and income: The roles of trade and migration', *Journal of International Economics*, 92 (2), 231–251.
- Oso, L. and N. Ribas-Mateos (eds) (2013), *The International Handbook on Gender, Migration and Transnationalism*, Chelmsford, Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Parreñas, R. (2015) *Servants of Globalization: Migration and Domestic Work*, Redwood City, CA, Stanford University Press.
- Peri, G. and V. Yasenov (2019), 'The labor market effects of a refugee wave: Synthetic control method meets the Mariel boatlift', *Journal of Human Resources*, 54 (2), 267–309.
- Raess, D. and B. Burgoon (2015), 'Flexible work and immigration in Europe', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 53 (1), 94–111
- Rolfe, H. and N. Hudson-Sharp (2016), *The Impact of Free Movement on the Labour Market: Case Studies of Hospitality, Food Processing and Construction*. London: National Institute of Economic and Social Research.
- Ruhs, M. (2013) *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ruhs, M. and B. Anderson (eds) (2012), *Who Needs Migrant Workers?: Labour Shortages, Immigration, and Public Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sayad, A. (2004) [1999] *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Scholten, P., A. Pisarevskaya and N. Levy (2022), 'An introduction to migration studies: The rise and coming of age of a research field', in P. Scholten (ed), *Introduction to Migration Studies. IMISCOE Research Series*, Cham., Springer, 3–24.
- Streeck, W. (2017), 'Between charity and justice: remarks on the social construction of immigration policy in rich democracies', *DaWS Working Paper Series*, 2017–5.
- Villarreal, A. and C.R. Tamborini (2018), 'Immigrants' economic assimilation: Evidence from longitudinal earnings records', *American Sociological Review*, 83 (4), 686–715.
- Waldinger, R. and P. Catron (2016), 'Modes of incorporation: a conceptual and empirical critique', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42 (1), 23–53.

