

**Michael Collyer, Franck Duwell, and Irina Molodikova (eds) *Transit Migration in Europe*, IMISCOE Research, Amsterdam University Press, 246 pages, ISBN 9789089646491**

*Review by Sanja TEPAVCEVIC*

The term “transit migration” dates back to the movement of refugees out of German occupied Europe during the second world war and to immediate post-colonial arrivals of migrants in important gateway cities. Nevertheless, currently this term is usually used to address actual or potential irregular migrations across Europe. The group of authors of the *Transit Migration in Europe* unpacks the term “transit migration”, questioning its appropriateness of use in Europe by, simultaneously, examining usefulness of the term in Northern African and Mediterranean in general, and Central and Eastern European contexts. The authors comprehensively demonstrate that the term is usually not only overstretched for political, administrative, or analytical purposes, but sometimes even irrelevant in addressing migration processes in Europe and in its southern and eastern neighbourhood.

The volume consists of nine chapters, including first, introductory chapter, which provides thoughtful theoretical framework to the topic of the volume, and ninth chapter, which concludes by masterly situating findings into existing literature. The rest of chapters represent empirically rich case studies, and are divided into two thematic parts: first, addressing migration processes to and from North Africa and Mediterranean, or, as the authors characterize it, Mediterranean quadrants, and second, devoted to migrations to and from Russia, Hungary, and Moldova, or, as the authors put it, Central and Eastern European quadrants.

Written by the editors of the volume, Michael Collyer, Franck Duwell, and Irina Molodikova, the first chapter introduces the history of the term “transit migration”, the ways it is currently used, and setbacks of its use across the examined countries. By justly criticising usually inappropriate use of the term

“transit migration” the authors suggest that greater attention should be paid to the journeys of migrants and responses to their experiences in the various countries, where they spend time.

The second chapter, written by Ahmet Icduyugu and Deniz Sert, represents the first case study of the first part of the book, profoundly addressing migration processes in Turkey. The title of the chapter *Migrants’Uncertainties versus State’s Insecurities* simultaneously reflects the two viewpoints, from which the problem is analyzed. Namely, the authors demonstrate that, Turkey represents an uncertain environment for migrants, while the Turkish state envisions migration as a threat. The authors provide a significant insight to the lives of irregular migrants in Turkey and Turkish policymakers and government officers.

The third chapter, written by Mulki Al-Sharmani, comprehensively continues examination of journeys and lives of migrants from Somalia, Sudan, Palestine, and Iraq in Egypt. Rich empirical data about the lives of each of these four groups of migrants in Egypt reveals huge differences, especially among Somali migrants, in social statuses between those, who arrived to Egypt earlier as students, and those, who arrived later, mostly as refugees. Although Article 53 of the Egyptian Constitution provides the right to asylum to political refugees, the author demonstrates that refugees are mostly treated as foreigners, thus they are not allowed to access legal employment, free education, and public health services, which makes their economic conditions very harsh. Therefore, according to Al-Sharmani, most refugees in Egypt are seeking to resettlement programmes.

Similarly, chapter four reveals struggles of everyday lives of the Sub-Saharan migrants in Maghreb. Describing journeys, thoughts, and struggles for survival of these migrants, Mehdi Alioua approves that the term ‘stopover’ is much more appropriate to address activities of Sub-Saharan Africans in Maghreb, than the notion of ‘transit’. The author also conceptualize journey of these migrants into the three stages: de-territorialization, re-territorialization, and re-de-territorialization. Alioua reveals high significance of transmigrants’ solidarity networks across Africa and Europe in their travelling and survival practices.

In chapter five Cetta Mainwaring examines the role of Malta in the migration policy of the European Union (EU), but also the ways that Maltese government uses Malta’s EU membership in attempts to avoid responsibility for irregular migrants. The author vividly describes precarious conditions in which migrants on Malta are kept, as it turns, intentionally. At the same time, the author

demonstrates that migrants' arrival to Malta has mostly been unintentional: most of them have crossed Mediterranean during nights planning to reach Italian coasts. Mainwaring reveals allegations between Maltese government and international organizations for precarious conditions, in which refugees live. The author also justly notice that Maltese government and media depict irregular migrants as a threat, while main concerns are their race and social class, and not number of arrivals to Malta.

The second part of the book starts from the chapter six, written by Irina Ivakhnyuk on East-to-West circuit migration through Russia starting from early 1990s. The author argues that, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and opening of the borders in the early 1990s, Russia became cheap and convenient land route to Asian and African migrants to Europe, but also a route for extensive migrant smuggling networks. The author also reveals an important fact that Russia's eastern and southern borders are less controlled and therefore porous, while strict border controls are on the Russia's western borders, mostly due to strict migration policies of the EU. At the same time, Ivakhnyuk justly notice that, because of its own rapid economic growth and consequent demand for migrant labor, Russia also became attractive as a country of destination. By examining economic activities and travel plans of various ethnic and national groups, including Africans, Afgans, and Chinese, the author demonstrates that Russia still plays this dual role in the world's migration flows.

Chapter seven, written by Irina Molodikova, profoundly examines the role and place of Hungary in wider European system of migration inflows. According to the author, Hungary, on the one hand, has played a role of a buffer zone between East and West for more than fifty years. On the other hand, it proves dualism and ambiguity of EU migration policy, because of Hungary's manouvrring between its EU obligations as a member state, and obligations to Hungarians living in neighboring non-EU countries. As Molodikova points out, countries that send most migrants to Hungary are those neighbouring countries with relatively large Hungarian minorities, notably, Romania, Ukraine, and Serbia. In 2010 Hungarian government introduced naturalization policy for ethnic Hungarians from neighboring countries. Molodikova finds that the decision for migrants to remain in Hungary has depended on presence or absence of social networks, while no integration policy was introduced. As a result, only ethnic Hungarians from the neighboring countries, and those immigrants, who married Hungarians integrated into Hungarian society.

In chapter eight Valeri Mosneaga analyzes irregular migration flows of the Moldovan citizens to the EU countries. While the author admits that, due to relatively flexible migration policies among the former Soviet countries, most of Moldovan citizens migrate to Russia in search of job and earning opportunities, he also demonstrates that there is an increasing migration flow to the EU countries from Moldova. Mosneaga demonstrates that remittances from Moldovan migrants sent to Moldova constitute about 30 percent of the country's GDP, so migration reduced poverty in this poorest European country by 25 percent. The author also reveals that numbers of Moldovan migrants feel victims of human trafficking and sexual trade.

By comparing findings of the case studies from both parts of the book, in the concluding chapter Franck Duwell finds striking similarities between countries as different as Ukraine, Morocco, Turkey and Egypt in terms of irregular migration. All these countries have been on the cross-roads between poor sending and rich receiving regions, and on traditional trading routes. Thus, all of them experienced significant flows of irregular migrants and, due to pressures from the EU, many of them appeared, in Duwell's words, as places of involuntary immigration.

Overall, the book *Transit Migration in Europe* reveals that, in fact, any country may become temporary or transit destination mostly because of inability or unwillingness of its government to develop and implement UN rules for migrants and refugees. This is the reason why some contributors to the book suggest that both EU and the governments of peripheral countries should focus on legal migration and asylum provisions, rather than on restrictions. Although based mostly on data collected in middle-2000s, the book represents significant contribution to the knowledge about motives for migration to Europe, ways of reaching desired destinations, and obstacles that both migrants and countries that they cross experience in these long and often dangerous journeys with usually ambiguous results. Published in 2014, represents one of valuable explanation to the migration crisis in Europe, that peaked in 2015. Thus, the book is recommended in the first place to policymakers and policy implementators of the EU member states, but also to those decision-makers in countries of the regions neighboring with the EU. Students of graduate courses on migration and development would also greatly benefit from reading this book.