Editorial

Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Mette Louise Berg and Johanna Waters

Since the “birth” of our journal, we have been committed to publishing work that situates migration in a wider historical and societal context, which has included paying attention to critical theoretical perspectives on migration, and particularly encouraging scholarship from and about the global South. This commitment is also related to the increasingly mainstream acknowledgment that Anglophone academic studies of and policy responses to migration and displacement continue to have a strong Northern or Eurocentric bias. In effect, while scholars and journals focused on “migration” and the cognate fields of “ethnic and racial studies” have often prioritized studies of South-North migration (i.e., from “underdeveloped” or “developing” countries “to” North America, Europe, and Australia), much less attention has been paid to migration within and across the countries of the so-called global South (i.e., South-South migration). In turn, scholars and policy makers alike have often positioned particular directionalities and modalities of migration, and specified groups of migrants as “problems to be solved,” including through processes that are deeply gendered, classed, and racialized.

The enduring Eurocentric bias of both research and policy is far from surprising given the extent to which migration studies, as an institutional field of study, itself has strong geographical and epistemological roots first in North America and, from the 1970s and 1980s, subsequently in Europe, and migration research has often been intimately linked to the political and policy concerns of states in those regions. Indeed, as critical scholars have long argued, research, policy, and practice have often been implicated in broader systems of inequality that aim to “keep ‘Southerners’ in the South,” as “part and parcel of Northern states’ inhumane, racist and racialised systems of border and immigration control” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley 2018: 19).

It is within this context that this special issue of *Migration and Society* aims to consider the question of “Recentering the South in Studies of Migration.” It does so by posing the following questions: What does it mean to “recenter” that which has, and those who have, been placed and kept at the margins? Whose voices and perspectives should be involved in recentering? And to what or whom does “the South” refer in such contested domains?

As Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh argues in the introduction to this volume, rather than advocating for one particular conceptualization or enactment of “recentering the South,” the articles published in this special issue highlight diverse ways of approaching the study of migration in relation to the so-called global South. This ranges from documenting diverse dynamics of migration in the South and of South-South migration, to exploring how international agencies aim to promote South-South cooperation, to “centering” previously marginalized actors in order to examine critically concepts, policies, and programs developed by and for European states and international intergovernmental organizations (which remain Northern-led), to reflecting on the geopolitics of knowledge and the potential for Southern, decolonial, and anticolonial ways of knowing, being in, and responding to the world, including through architectural and artistic practice and knowledge. In conjunction with this editorial, the introduction critically delineates

the contours of these debates, provides the frame for the volume, and sets out a number of thematic and editorial priorities for *Migration and Society* moving forward.

Within the context of the overarching focus of this volume, a special themed section guest edited by Antje Missbach and Melissa Phillips explores the concept and political imbrications of “transit states” as viewed, not from the perspective of Europe, North America, and Australia—which interpellate themselves as “destination” countries and aim to mobilize “transit states” to restrict people’s onward migration—but from the vantage points of states such as Ecuador (Sole-dad Álvarez Velasco), Mexico (Wendy Vogt), Malaysia and Indonesia (Antje Missbach and Gerhard Hoffstaedter), and diverse local actors in Libya (Melissa Phillips) and Niger (Sébastien Moretti).

Through three research articles and two ‘People and Places’ pieces, the section

direct[s] attention to transit countries in the global South both to examine how they react to . . . external demands to become gatekeepers and, more importantly, to understand the (self-)perceptions, conceptualizations, and discourses of transit that have developed over time within these Southern positionalities, which . . . are very different from the common understanding of “the transit country” developed for the European borderlands, such as Turkey or Ukraine. (Missbach & Phillips, 20)

Following this Special Theme, five further research articles examine different dynamics pertaining to “Recentering the South in Studies of Migration.” Neil Carrier and Gordon Mathews explore connections between two sites that “have become emblematic of much South-South migration and mobility” (Eastleigh, Nairobi, and Xiaobei, Guangzhou), thereby highlighting the ways that South-South migration “offer opportunities for literal and social mobility—opportunities that the global North attempts to restrict for citizens of the South.” Three articles then focus on different dimensions of refugee response in diverse countries of the global South. Hanno Brankamp and Patricia Daley’s article traces how “both colonial and postcolonial migration regimes in Kenya and Tanzania have reproduced forms of differential governance toward the mobilities of particular African bodies,” exploring racialization processes taking place between African societies and setting out an agenda for future research in this field. Complementing Brankamp and Daley’s emphasis on regimes and systems that create inequalities, including vis-à-vis exploitative labor regimes, Reem Farah’s article critically “studies up” the humanitarian industry and the unequal position of “expatriate” versus “local” humanitarian workers in Jordan. Further expanding the focus on local responses to displacement, Heather Wurtz and Olivia Wilkinson examine the ways that local faith actors in Mexico and Honduras conceptualize and engage with concepts such as “innovation” and “self-sufficiency” that are central to the international humanitarian system. Demonstrating the significance of historically, spatially, and socially sensitive analyses of migration, in their article, Sarah Turner, Thi-Thanh-Hien Pham, and Ngô Thủy Hạnh subsequently examine migration processes within the context of Vietnam’s northern upland frontier. In so doing, they aim to “contribute to broader debates regarding migrant ongoing engagement with their homelands, and diversity and stratification within migration flows in the global South.”

Following these nuanced empirical and conceptual engagements, the “People and Places” section present scholars’ and practitioners’ critical interventions into these debates. Through the format of interviews and conversations, Juliano Fiori and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh on the one hand, and Nof Nasser-Eddin and Nour Abu-Assab on the other, engage critically with the politics of knowledge production, arguing powerfully against the Eurocentric nature of migration and displacement studies and laying out their respective visions for future research, policy, and practice in this field. In turn, Francesco Carella, interviewed by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, draws

on his work with international organizations in South America, the Caribbean, and North Africa to discuss the ways that organizations and states approach and use the concept of “the South” and “South-South migration” and how they “do South-South.” The final two “People and Places” pieces offer critical insights into spatial interventions of different kinds, with Riccardo Conti, Joana Dabaj, and Elisa Pascucci discussing the potential role of participatory architecture in a Syrian refugee settlement to challenge traditional modes of humanitarian programming. Meanwhile, Camillo Boano and Giovanna Astolfo draw on AbdouMaliq Simone’s “southern ethnography” to explore the politics of care and hospitality as inhabitation in the context of refugees’ dwelling practices in the Italian city of Brescia.

Further continuing the theme first explored in our inaugural issue [<https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/migration-and-society/1/1/migration-and-society.1.issue-1.xml>] of *Migration and Society* on “Hospitality and Hostility toward Migrants,” the pieces included in our “Reflections” section centralize the roles of academics and universities from Southeast Asia (Sin Yee Koh) and South America (Liliana Jubilit) in promoting the study of migration and the promotion of refugee, migrant, and, indeed, nonmigrant rights in these regions. Where Koh reflects on her research in Brunei and Malaysia, and Jubilit delineates the roles of Brazilian universities and academics across Brazil and South America in studies of and responses to (forced) migration, Marcia Vera Espinoza draws together this section by offering critical reflections on the ethics of conducting research with Palestinian and Colombian refugees resettled in South America.

In his introduction to the “Creative Encounters” section, Yousif M. Qasmiyeh stresses that “embroidering the voice is writing the intimate, the lived, and the leftovers in life into newer times as imagined by the writer herself,” thereby “engendering plural tales” of migration. In this section, three short stories explore memories in relation to different forms of migration—one, by Simone Toji, tracing the perceptions of an elderly Polish migrant in São Paulo, Brazil, and two exploring the Partition of India, by Suranjana Choudhury. Subsequently, Rafael Guendelman Hales delineates the ways that Iraqi refugee women in London have reimaged and reconstructed the Library of Ashurbanipal in light of their present, past, and future imaginaries.

We also include a number of contributions that are not directly linked to this issue’s overarching theme of “Recentring the South in Studies of Migration.” These include Alexandra Urdea’s article about the fashioning of masculinities through migration for Romanian construction workers in London, and Christine Moderbacher’s reflections on the ends and limits of ethnographic research as she returns to her erstwhile field site, the Molenbeek neighborhood in Brussels. Continuing our aim of bringing different perspectives and forms of knowledge into conversation, in our “Roundtable” section, Tom Western’s critical reflection on the importance of “listening with displacement” as a means of not only disrupting representations of migration but also of challenging problematic representational practices is followed by Syrian musician Rihab Azar’s response to his article. The volume concludes with a selection of book reviews edited by Agnieszka Kubal and Gunvor Jonsson, including a number of books related to Southern, anticolonial, and antiracist approaches.

In all, Volume 3 presents a series of challenges and questions that we will continue to explore in future issues: how to be attentive to, and where appropriate aim to disrupt, structural inequalities that restrict and frame who writes what, how, and why; the political economy and cultural politics of how different people are read, engaged with, and cited; how to address the imbalance of the topics, geographies, and directionalities of migration and styles of writing published in these pages; how meaningfully to encourage scholarship from and about the global South in ways that are neither tokenistic nor fetishistic; and how to enact critical theoretical reflections on and through “the South” without either reifying this construct or constituting it as the abso-

lute opposite of “the North.” As noted by Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley (2018: 22), “Decoloniality demands a de-centering of global North knowledge through opening up spaces in Northern publications and through genuine collaborations in knowledge production”—while it may remain to be seen if this process necessarily means “recentering the South,” this is a demand and challenge that *Migration and Society* will continue to take seriously moving forward.

In Memory of Claire Dwyer

We dedicate this issue to the memory of our friend, colleague, and editorial board member Claire Dwyer (1964–2019).

■ REFERENCES

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena, and Patricia Daley. 2018. “Conceptualising the Global South and South-South Encounters.” In *The Handbook of South-South Relations*, ed. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Patricia Daley, 1–28. Oxford: Routledge.