

INTRODUCTION



Migration and race in Europe

Contextualizing the present

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing public policy and political debate about issues related to migration and refugee movements across the borders of Europe. This has been evident in the UK, France, the Netherlands and Germany, all of which have had long experience with questions about immigration and race (Anderson 2013; Alba and Foner 2015; Foner and Simon 2015). But in recent years these debates have also become an established part of political and civil society discourses across both Southern and Eastern European societies and beyond (Dancygier 2010; De Genova 2017). We have seen diverse forms of political and civil society mobilization about questions linked to immigration, race and cultural diversity in contemporary Europe. While such mobilizations were also evident in the 1980s and 1990s (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Wrench and Solomos 1993; Castles 2000), the current conjuncture can be seen as representing a new stage in the development of what some commentators represent as a “crisis”. This is partly because of the scale of migration and refugee movements across the “borders” of Europe, but it is also linked to political debates about such issues as cultural identity, national culture and the integration of minority communities.

These public and media discourses about immigration and refugees have been accompanied by a growing and increasingly diverse body of academic scholarship on these and related questions. This literature has been produced through empirical research as well as conceptual and theoretical debate focusing both on the general patterns of immigration and formation of minority communities as well as specific sub-fields such as multiculturalism, integration, political participation, religious diversity and social inclusion (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014; Dancygier 2017; Schinkel 2017). It is also noticeable in the growing bodies of monographs and articles on migration and refugees that have been produced over the past two decades. As editors of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, we have experienced this expansion in studies of migration, race and ethnicity quite directly in the form of an increasing number of original research articles, special issues and debate articles that have been submitted to the journal covering key facets of this evolving field.

During the current decade, we have seen recurring media debates and moral panics about various aspects of the immigration and refugee question across Europe. Images of refugees struggling to cross the Mediterranean, and

in many cases drowning before they reach their destinations, have become an all too common feature of both the terrestrial and social media channels (Czajka and Suchland 2017; Squire 2017). The “borders” of Europe have become the site of a real-life humanitarian crisis that reflects events and social processes across various parts of the globe. In this context, we have seen growing intense media and policy debate about who is allowed to enter Europe and about how to “integrate” those minorities who are already within particular nation states.

This has raised important questions for both policy-makers and for scholars alike. Questions such as: How do we make sense of the “migration crisis” and its impact on Europe? What kinds of political and civil society responses to the arrival of migrants and refugees are necessary within specific nation states and the European Union more generally? How do societies deal with the nativist and racist discourses that have emerged in the context of the current crisis? The various papers that follow address specific facets of these questions, and do so on the basis of original research.

Key themes

As the leading journal in the field of race and ethnic studies, we have also sought to be as inclusive as possible to this growing body of high-quality research on migration and refugee movements in the wider European environment. We have published both regular research papers and a range of special issues that have as their focus key dimensions of these phenomena. In this *Themed Issue*, we bring together eleven original research papers that have been accepted through our regular refereeing process that are concerned in one way or another with the interaction between race, migration and ethnicity in contemporary European societies. The issues covered by the papers range across a wide range of national contexts and themes, but they are held together by a common focus on the changing dynamics of migration, race and ethnic relations in the contemporary European environment. We have included them in this issue in order to help our readers to look at the various papers rather than read them in isolation.

The first paper by Nicola Montagna is focused on the protests that were organized in 2010–11 by undocumented migrants in Italy and examines the relational dynamics within the movement behind this mobilization. Montagna argues that although there is growing literature exploring different aspects of migrant activism and border struggles, a continuing weakness in this body of work is that the focus has been mostly on migrants as the objects of politics rather than the subjects. Arguing against this trend Montagna seeks to show that it is possible to look at the mobilizations of undocumented migrants from a different perspective, one that accounts for their own autonomous forms of subjective identity.

The concern with mobilization is shared with the paper by Marie Valentova and Aigul Alieva. This draws on research in Luxembourg among non-EU migrants that explores the degree of their involvement in voluntary associations. By comparing them with both “natives” and EU migrants, Valentova and Alieva seek to explore both the differences as well as the similarities between the three broad social groupings. They draw on empirical research among Cape Verdeans and ex-Yugoslavians as well as native residents and selected groups of EU immigrants.

The next paper by Magdalena Nowicka is concerned with the analysis of the revival and spread of forms of racism in contemporary Europe. She uses the case of the Polish “post-enlargement” immigration to England to explore the intersections between racism and immigration. Nowicka argues that although much of the literature on migration does not address questions about race and racism, it is important to scrutinize how racism works and is altered through social networks spanning localities within and across national borders.

The complexities of analysing racism in contemporary Europe are also the key concern of Vivienne Cretton’s paper on racism, skin colour and identity in Western Switzerland. Cretton begins her analysis by exploring the mechanisms through which Switzerland is commonly considered as a “white nation” and yet is also commonly considered as “raceless”. She argues forcefully that although Switzerland is often constructed as “raceless”, this is as a result of a normative notion of whiteness as a cultural norm. By drawing on the wider research on whiteness, she seeks to show that socio-cultural expressions of white normativity help to produce common-sense ideas about race and racism. A key theme in Cretton’s account is an analysis of how non-white citizens with migration backgrounds incorporate themselves by adopting the dominant discourse that denies the presence of races and racism in Switzerland.

The study by Mieke Maliepaard and Diana D. Schacht focuses on the group that has attracted perhaps the most attention across Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century, namely minority communities of Muslim origin. In particular, they are concerned to explore the question of how far the degree of religiosity impact on how successfully recent Muslim migrants integrate socially into the host society in terms of their social contacts with the majority population and their ethno-religious group. Basing their analysis on a two-wave study among recent migrants in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, they seek to show any answer to this question needs to explore the complex social and cultural dynamics with the host societies as well as the Muslim minority communities themselves. In the next paper, Saskia Bonjour and Jan Willem Duyvendak continue the focus on integration through a critical analysis of Dutch civic integration debates and the linkages that have emerged with racialized notions about class and culture. They argue that

the recent trend towards selective immigration in societies such as Holland is based on the racialization of certain categories of migrants into irretrievably unassimilable “others”. Such arguments have a deeper historical resonance as scholars such as David Goldberg have shown (Goldberg 2006), but Bonjour and Duyvendank’s account provides a case studies of how they impact on specific policy and political agendas.

The paper by Maykel Verkuyten, Kieran Mephram and Mathijs Kros is also based on research in Holland, although its focus is on the ways in which public attitudes towards support for migrants can be measured and analysed. They argue that an important influence on public attitudes to immigration can be found in the ways the migrants are presented in public and political debates. They argue that it is important to explore the extent to which migrants are described as either having little choice but to migrate or as migrating out of their own free choice. Using a social psychological perspective, they asked “native” Dutch respondents to what extent their support for policies aimed at cultural rights and public assistance was shaped by the perceived position of voluntary and involuntary migrants. In their empirical analysis, they seek to show that this is an important issue in shaping public attitudes to immigration and policies aimed at supporting migrants.

The importance of comparative analysis is a key concern in the next paper by Frances McGinnitty and Merove Gijsberts, which focuses on the experiences of Poles in Ireland and the Netherlands. By using a new immigrants’ panel survey, the paper examines discrimination and early integration among Polish migrants, and seeks to provide an insight into their evolving position in the two countries. McGinnitty and Gijsberts’ account highlights the importance of using a comparative frame in order to understand both commonalities and differences across national contexts.

The final three papers are focused directly on the experiences of specific communities. Roda Madziva’s account draws on detailed qualitative research among draws on research with Pakistani Christians seeking asylum in the UK. By focusing on those with English or Biblical names, the paper seeks to explore both the relationship between names and religious persecution in the country of origin, and secondly, the complex interaction between names, bodies, religion and nationality within the UK asylum system. It argues that in responding to the perceived threats of immigration and terrorism, British immigration officials tend to use Pakistani as a proxy for Islam, with those Christians who possess English or Biblical names often perceived to be a more suspicious group.

The paper by Marianne Kindt uses a case study of children of immigrants in Norway who are enrolled higher education fields such as medicine, dentistry, engineering and law, to explore the context in which they make choices to enrol for these programmes. It draws on qualitative interviews to describe

these minority youths' accounts of this choice, and to analyse the emerging narratives as part of an identity construction. By exploring issues of choice and identity, Kindt argues that it is important to pay attention to how the children of migrants construct their life opportunities.

The final contribution to this *Themed Issue* by Marta Eichsteller is framed around the need to develop a fuller understanding of the ways in which mobile individuals construct their own narratives about mobility and migration which provide us with unique perspectives on the condition of modern societies. This article aims to establish the link between narrative accounts of mobility and the conceptual framework of migration studies.

Conclusion

In the context of current debates about migration and race in Europe, it is important for researchers to explore the complex social, political and cultural processes that have helped to shape these phenomena. Indeed, what is striking to us as Editors of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* is that there is great variation in how these questions are researched, both in terms of methods and analytical focus. Even in the eleven papers included in this issue, we see a range of methodologies, conceptual tools and empirical case studies. In this fast-developing field of scholarship, this kind of diversity will hopefully help to open up new avenues for research and encourage debate that takes account of the differences and linkages between national research cultures and socio-political environments. We offer this issue to readers of the journal in the hope that they will find it interesting to look at the various papers and see some possible linkages between them.

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