

Susan Eva Eckstein and Adil Najam (editors), *How Immigrants Impact their Homelands*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013, 261 pages, ISBN 978-0-8223-5395-9

Review by Cristina Matiuta

Immigration is one of the most important components of the globalization process, affecting tens of millions people worldwide. Many studies deals with this complex phenomenon, especially in terms of immigrants' adaptation in the receiving countries or in terms of their transnational ties with families and communities left behind.

The book reviewed here, *How Immigrants Impact their Homelands*, edited by Susan Eva Eckstein and Adil Najam, proposes a comprehensive approach of the economic, social, political and cultural impacts that immigrants from developing countries have on their homelands. According to statistics, three quarters of today's immigrants are born in developing countries and they are moving to high-income countries, becoming agents of homeland development. Countries as Mexico, China, India, Turkey, considered in this book, are among the countries providing the largest number of people who emigrate.

The book includes as case studies China, India, Cuba, Mexico, Turkey, Marocco, Philippines, Mozambique, preceded by two theoretical chapters. Thus, in the first chapter, Susan Eckstein provides an overview for a better understanding of the case studies detailed in the following chapters. We find out here which are the characteristics of emigrants, where do they go and how to explain the patterning of immigration. Immigration must be understood in the context of historical and institutional processes. State policies, changing demographics, transnational social dynamics- all influence from and to where people in today's world move. In the next chapter, Alejandro Portes examines the conditions under which migrants become agents of homeland development. In the author's view, international migration could be transformed into a win-win process, if sending and receiving governments would take active steps in organizing it as a managed labor-transfer program guided by the long term development potential of migration rather than its short-term economic consequences.

The remaining chapters focus on country studies, highlighting the economic impacts or social consequences that immigrants have had. Thus, in the third chapter, Min Ye shows that Chinese emigrants became instrumental in the industrial transformation of their country since the late 1970s, being the largest investors in their homeland and influencing the government's reform policies. This idea of immigrants contribution to the economic development of their homeland is also supported by Kyle Eischen in his chapter about the Indian case. Indian immigrants have contributed to India development establishing an important niche as an exporter of information-technology-based software services that build in their skills, networks and capital acquired in the United States. The Indian government facilitated the founding of investment zones related to software activity as the Chinese facilitated the industrial manufacturing investments. As a result, the two countries have established somewhat complementary niches within the global economy.

In the fifth chapter, Susan Eckstein describes how the Cubans emigrated in the United States contributed to a transformation of the Cuban economy, values and norms, to a transformation of Cuban society, firstly as a consequence of their commitment to a family they left behind. Both recipients of remittances and government benefited from the generosity of diaspora, which produced the changes in life style, values, norms and the increase of consumers' expense.

In Mexico, as David Scott Fitzgerald emphasizes in his chapter about the immigrant impacts, the concept of *dissimilation* (understood as the process of becoming different), describes the changes involved by this phenomenon. As Mexican immigrants and their children become similar to other Americans (98% of all Mexican emigrants are in the United States), they become dissimilar from the nonmigrant Mexicans they left behind. Drawing on research in six migrant-origin communities in four Mexican states, the chapter underlines how migrants change even when they maintain homeland ties and even when they assimilate in their new land.

In the next chapter, Riva Kastoryano analyzes how Turks living abroad redefine Turkish nationalism. They difuse new ideas, introduce new discourses, initiate new forms of actions and transmit their knowledge of democratic politics acquired in Europe. Thus, they are playing an important role in questioning official Turkish nationalism, considered natural until recently, but now defensive in the face of claims of cultural and Islamic rights with a legal basis in European countries and institutions.

The last three book chapters highlight the social consequences that immigrants have in Philippines, Central America and Mozambique. Migration generates the second largest amount of foreign currency in the Philippines (next to



electronics manufacturing), making women into breadwinners, not only in their families, but also for the nation. Due to the demand for domestic workers in the richer countries throughout the world, the migration of Filipino women breaks the traditional gender division of labor in the family. In Central American countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras), migrants who returned from the United States brought the gangs with them, contributing to a surge in crime and public insecurity. It is a challenge for local authorities and extant institutions to deal with the identities migration creates, to fight against violence and youth social exclusion. In Mozambique, men's labor migration to neighboring South Africa generates fears about the HIV/AIDS risks among their nonmigrant wives. The women's gains in material well-being come thus with costs of uncertainty and concerns about contacting infection from their partners, showing us the multidimensional consequences migration may have on the families, communities and countries involved.

Consequently, as appears from this brief description of its content, the book represents undoubtedly a valuable contribution for those interested in the multiple facets of migration, broadening the understanding on the complex consequences of this phenomenon. Benefiting from the wisdom of scholars who are leading experts of emigration from developing countries, the volume provide a foundation for policy reforms that could strengthen the positive effects and minimize the negative effects of the today's mobile world.