

Book reviews

The Long, Slow Death of White Australia

Tavan, Gwenda

(2005) Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 298p.

(ISBN 1 920760 46 3.)

The White Australia Policy has been Australia's immigration policy and more broadly its national identity from the 1850s onwards. Tavan aims in this book at filling gaps in research by assessing the legacy of the White Australia Policy and the slow political process by which it was eventually dismantled. Tavan's book manages to touch indeed topical issue in Australian society since, as she ascertains, the debate of the White Australia is still not over in Australia (pp. 4-5). Central to Tavan's argument is that the White Australia Policy was not finally dismantled by stealth but by gradual political process which was enhanced by several factors (pp. 5, 235).

The Long, Slow Death of White Australia is an accurate chronological assessment of the dismantling process of Australia's ambiguous immigration policy in which Tavan also explains what the White Australia Policy was and where it derived from. According to Tavan, White Australia as an ideology was heavily attached to the formation of the Australian Federation in 1901 and it was implemented especially in the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act. The meaning of the Act was 'to shield Australian workers from the vagaries of cheap Asiatic labour, and protect national sovereignty against a potential Asiatic invasion' (pp. 8). Indeed, immigration or entrance of non-Europeans into Australian Federation was made extremely difficult legally in the first half of the 20th Century.

Gwenda Tavan describes with interesting examples how Australian immigration recruitment scheme was established after the Second World War and how it was planned to suit to the White Australia ideology. However, while Australia needed rapid population growth after the War, the ideology of the White Australia came into re-evaluation. As the author

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illuminates well growing foreign pressure towards Australia's ambiguous immigration policy after the Second World War, she is not clear in explaining attitudes of Australians towards the White Australia. Tavan writes that public attitudes in Australia were softening in the 1940s and 'sections of the Australian community began to campaign for amendments to the policy' (pp. 40). However, she argues later on that at the same time, majority opinion was still 'firmly on the side of the policy' (pp. 41). References like these make *the Long, Slow death of White Australia* partially difficult to attached.

Tavan manages to reinforce her argument by interesting immigration cases taking place for example in the late 1940s when Australia's minister for immigration Arthur Calwell tried to deport Asian nationals who had entered Australia during the War. She succeeds in viewing deportation cases from a fresh perspective and these case studies add interesting flavours to her argument. Tavan highlights minor changes in government attitude towards immigration policy by bringing that the Liberal Party, in office from late 1949 onwards, had promised for a more humane and liberal Australian immigration policy although 'substance of White Australia was still intact' (pp. 65). From the 1950s onwards, Australia's relations with Asia gained importance especially because of trade possibilities and promising markets for Australian products. Then, Australia's immigration policy, still favouring Europeans, was seen as a probable threat for both economic and political reasons. Tavan affirms that Australia's attachment to international and regional organizations and agreements, such as SEATO and Colombo Plan, enforced Australia to reconsider their immigration policies while ultimate ghost rising in horizon was the spread of communism in Asia (pp. 82-84). Author manages to entice interest in overall world politics in the 1950s and especially Australia's role in it.

Most chapters in *the Long Slow death of White Australia* are detailed prescription of political changes taking place in Australian immigration administration and legislation gathered through archives and policy papers. Tavan's individu-

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alistic view of history and policy-making comes clear in the seventh chapter which focuses on two individuals, Sir Peter Heydon, who served as a secretary of the Immigration Department in Australia between 1961 and 1971, and Hubert Opperman, who was a Minister for Immigration from 1963 to 1967. Tavan gives extensive value for both being *primus motors* behind important immigration policy changes introduced in 1966, but she does not explain where these kind of political actors came from and what was the role of wider social changes in Australia. Therefore *the Long, Slow death of White Australia* partially lacks broader perspective while explaining dismantling of the White Australia Policy concentrating too heavily on the role of certain individuals. From this perspective, in historical theoretical terms, Tavan would fall into Rankean school of historians and like Leopold von Ranke himself, Tavan can be criticised for emphasizing of political history and underestimating economic and social forces.

After assessing influential policy changes in 1966, Tavan assesses ambiguous times of the White Australia Policy saga from 1966 to 1972. Here the author moves away from only political historian perspective and assesses more broadly the change in Australian society by evaluating, for example, the growth of universities, demonstrations against the Vietnam War and the rise of New Left in Australia as factors having an effect on the dismantling process (pp. 167-8). Political process and political history of the White Australia policy, according to Tavan, came to an end in 1972 when the Labour Party won office and new Minister for Immigration Al Grassby forcefully declared that 'White Australia is dead. Give me a shovel and I will bury it' (pp. 204). Ideology of 'Whites Only' was changed into multiculturalism - a new concept cherishing cultural differences within Australia from the early 1970s onwards.

As a conclusion, in *the Long, Slow death of White Australia* Tavan keeps her promise. The dismantling of the White Australia Policy is assessed from political point of view and she affirms and demonstrates that indeed, it was dismantled through several, partially independent, partially combined

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series of administrative changes and not by well-planned political stealth (pp. 235-6). However, her strong political approach to the history of the White Australia Policy offers limited explanation of dismantling process since attitudes and attitude formation in Australian society is only given a minor role.

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Displacement Risks in Africa

Itaru Ohta and Yntiso D. Gebre (eds.)

(2005) Kyoto: Kyoto University Press and Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 394p. (ISBN 1-920901-09-4)

The Centre for African Area Studies at Kyoto University hosted an international symposium on "Multidimensionality of Displacement Risks in Africa," which was convened in Kyoto, Japan, 2-3 November 2002. Chosen theme 'displacement' was to underline the fact that Africa is home to about 30 per cent of the world's refugees and 60 per cent of the world's internally displaced persons. Analyses of the major causes of displacement, exploration of multiple risk groups, and the multidimensional risks they encounter, and the strategies for countering displacement problems were central debates. Later a selection of these studies compiled into this valuable volume.

Extensive research carried out by leading researchers on population displacement and resettlement in Africa. Participants of the symposium and contributors of the volume included Michael M. Cernea, Jeff Crisp, Chris de Wet, Yntiso Gebre, Art Hansen, Gaim Kibreab, Eisei Kurimoto, Jean Marara, Itaru Ohta, Kai Schmidt-Soltau, Roos Willems, and Shinichi Takeuchi. Addressing the needs of

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academic community, governing agencies, practitioners, policy makers, investing corporations, planners, the book provides an excellent update on socio-economic, demographic, and political issues of Africa today.

Taking up a difficult task of conceptualisation through different perspectives and experiences, risk has been central issue. The risk-focused conceptual/analytical model and methodology is applied in the study of different types of displacement. Focusing on impoverishment in development-caused and conservation-caused population displacements, the book covers several public and private projects. Benefits of these projects are not clear and often not helpful for the poor, ethnic minorities, and indigenous populations. Another likely future trend is a massive rural exodus in response to declining socio-economic structure of the countryside. This is likely to trigger an increase in urban deprivation. The authors explored the possibilities and potentials to prevent and counter such pathologies.

Twelve contributions examined the issues under three broader themes: refugees and integration of returnees, development and conservation-induced displacements, the repercussions of immigration for the host populations. Among papers, there are case studies of civil-war refugees, and sector based analyses as well as analytical reviews of central issues. The book introduces the problems of conceptualisation which is followed by analyses of refugees, returnees, and identity processes in Africa drawing upon different country cases. Risks models are discussed in African poverty and resettlement nexus looking into environmental and socioeconomic issues. Concluding part focuses on implications of incoming displaced, refugee, and returnee populations influence on host societies. Kenyan and Ethiopian cases are analysed in detail.

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Controlling Illegal Immigration: A Global Perspective

Cornelius, Wayne A., Takeyuki Tsuda, Philip L. Martin, and James F. Hollifield (Eds). (2004) Second Edition Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, USA, 560 pp. (ISBN 0804744904)

The second edition of *Controlling Migration* presents a comprehensive account of contemporary immigration countries through a systematic, comparative study of immigration policies and policy outcomes. Chapters revolving around country cases help in answering questions of why certain immigration control measures are opted and why they failed. Following the first effort in between 1990 and 1994, contributors with diverse expertise convened at the University of California San Diego in May 2002 and came up with this excellent compilation, which is an excellent collection of interdisciplinary research and scholarship.

The central theme was the modern democracies' problem in controlling migration: how many immigrants to accept, what rights and services to provide them, and how to regulate immigration. Through in-depth examinations of the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Japan along with new analyses on Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, and South Korea, the book presents a systematic, comprehensive comparative study of immigration policy and policy assessments in industrialized countries. In each case, reasons underlying the choice of certain policies and failures are explored. Changing composition of international migration with an increasing volume of highly skilled professional migrants is also discussed.

In recent years, it has been the case that immigration became a central issue of politics and public policy in the advanced industrialized states leading to questions and fears that control over immigration is lost. However, the central dilemma of today's world is about strengthened economic ties, global economic integration, and liberalizing cross-

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border flows of capital and people. There remains the issue of free movement of labour has not yet been settled.

Cornelius and colleagues introduces the gap hypothesis and discuss the ways in which policy gaps are measured. They attempt to explain these gaps in contrast to convergence hypothesis focusing on immigration control and integration policies across industrialised countries.

The paradox however, as they put arose from the competing demands of local industries and manufacturers' lobbies seeking lowering the labour cost, and those of a shrinking middle class that feels threatened by an increasing labour pool of immigrants. This also leads pathologies of increasing right wing support among lower middle and lower classes.

There are contesting applications presented and discussed ranging from Spanish dislike to immigration in spite of a rising demand for low-cost immigrant labour, to the Japanese effort to sustain a racial homogeneity at all costs.

The book reads easily without imposing and each chapter's dialogue style provided with commentaries helps for an in-depth understanding of the issues.

One agreed problem in the book is that there is a growing gap between immigration goals and outcomes in each country, although authors do not necessarily agree on the root causes of this. An array of different approaches including push-pull factors of migration and network approaches is presented. The book also provide a fine timeline of how international migration has evolved in industrialised countries through guest workers to today's immigrant integration and controlling migration dilemmas.

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International Migration in Southeast Asia

Ananta, Aris & Arifin, Evi Nurvidya (Eds.)

(2004) Singapore: ISEAS (ISBN 981-230-279-4)

International migration in Southeast Asia bringing together regional experts to discuss main issues of migration within a regional context provide a sound background on especially labour market influences of migration, illegal migration and foreign workers. These Southeast Asian policy responses to immigration contrasts with the debates on traditional immigration countries' policies. Opening chapter starts with a provoking question: should Southeast Asian borders be opened?

There seems a lack of organisation in the book as it could have been better structured around broader themes such as migration policies, irregular or clandestine migration, transnationalisation, conflict. Despite four themes were set in the first chapter, the book ends up with four themes. This makes the book a compilation of conference papers –actually it is as such- rather than an edited book.

Main focus of the book is to shed some light on the recent changes in international migration in the region during the last decade or so in particular. The opening question may scare some anti-immigration politicians in the West, however it provides a lively discussion on the issue with an open mind.

Distinct migration culture in the region is referred to by several authors in the book as an explanatory aspect of the current trends. Hugo's historical account and others' conceptualisation attempts on the trends reveals a central characteristic of international migration in the region: conflict. Conflict appears as the most important single factor shaping the regions' patterns including irregular migration, forced migration, and labour market issues due to illegal migrants.

Effects of international migration on countries' social, economic and political lives are well-documented in the book. Transnationalisation of businesses and needs for unrestricted movement of people internationally are core elements in the discussion. Seeing international migration as part of the

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global, integrated world economy, the debate looks at not restricting movement of people but at the problems arose from regular or irregular migration. Therefore, researchers are encouraging an 'open border' debate in order to see the real social and economic problems entailing an increased vulnerability for working classes.

I. SIRKECI

The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico

Jeffrey H. Cohen

(2004) *University of Texas Press, Austin, TX, USA, 207 p.*

(ISBN: 0-292-70592-1)

Migration is everyday life for many individuals and families in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. Some move only as far as to the state capital, while many others migrate far longer distances to the United States. Most are concerned about improvement of life back home and send money to their families, and eventually return to their homes after a few years.

Cohen explores the complex web of factors that motivate rural Oaxacans to migrate, patterns of their migration, the meaning of migration on families and communities, and the reasons why not many more Oaxacans do not migrate. His work is convincingly showing us that no single model can explain the patterns of migration in southern Mexico.

The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico explores the potentials of a cultural approach benefiting from the household model to understand migration in the central valleys of Oaxaca in Mexico. Drawing on fieldwork and survey data from twelve communities in the central valleys of Oaxaca, he tells us the story of a "culture of migration, an everyday experience and as an effective means to an end –economic well-being (p.147)."

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He starts with a reappraisal of the role of household in migration movements. Choosing household as the unit of migration may seem arbitrary or reasons may look weak; but Cohen's account on Oaxacans underlines the fact that, to a certain extent, almost all migration decisions are made by households: "Nevertheless, migrant as an individual makes the final decision (p.48)."

Second chapter places the Oaxacan migration within the context of migration in Mexico. It also refers to similarities between internal and international migration movements and changes in response to economic crisis the country witnessed. It is not a dull description of numbers and dates, but vivid depictions of mass migrations ranging from those who moved through bilateral-agreement-led bracero programmes between the US and Mexico to rural Oaxacans who migrated to the city of Oaxaca. After acknowledging the role of technological and infrastructural changes along with demographic and geographic factors in migration decision; he concludes the chapter with an emphasis on networks, ethnicity and language, and earlier migration experiences.

The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico clearly indicates that migration is to a great extent about networks and kinship ties through which migrants find shelter and job. Throughout the narratives, the importance of these networks appears as a recurrent theme.

Chapter four focuses on an important aspect of migration, remittances and how they are used in sending communities across Oaxaca. Repeating the many previous studies' findings, Cohen's work shows that most remittances used for daily expenses and consumption. Only a fraction is used for business investments, most of which are small shops. Households are able to use some of the remittances for investment only, once they covered daily expenses and necessary renovations to their homes. It also takes more members of the households to migrate for a longer time than usual.

According to Cohen, rural Oaxacans migrate to find paid work and with a hope of a better life at home and the decision is up to the household. This is in contrast to the Mexican

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migration pattern dominated by loner individualistic migrants.

The analyses of non-migrant households, not surprisingly, give interesting insights about why migration occurs and why not many more migrate.

Transnationalism does not find much reflection in Oaxacan case, according to Cohen, when he attested to the fact that these rural people's migration revolves around kinship ties with almost no sense of transnational communities, which has also been prevented by the dangers of the US border.

The migration narratives Cohen put together, read as stories of ordinary lives with simple needs. The Oaxacan migration, very responsive to the households' economic needs and cyclical changes in household economies, appears as a circular movement with often unpredictable periods. *Santaneros* of Cohen often went to the US for short periods to save enough to renovate their houses or add a new attachment or build a new bathroom.

Cohen rightly emphasises on migration, motives behind and functioning of it rather than trying to classify these movements into 'much-loved' illegal vs. legal, labour vs. family typologies. Cohen reminds us that migrants are fathers and mothers, not criminals, not "illegals" (p.140). Without resorting to dichotomies of regular versus clandestine migration, migrants appear before us as members of households seeking economic well-being beyond their home towns while some cross the borders as others move with 'green cards'.

One of his conclusions is the crucial potential of anthropologists to contribute migration studies due to "its focus on the social foundation and cultural nature of the moves people make" (p.144). Another underlying suggestion comes from this work is that a case-specific approach focusing on minor migration systems, such as the Oaxacan, is promising more in-depth understandings of human migrations, compared to studying national or broader regional migratory regimes.

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Discussing internal and international migration intertwiningly may seem confusing. It, however, works well in Cohen's book, and amazes the reader how these two are harmonious and inseparable in the case of Oaxacan and Mexican migrations often involving border crossings to the USA.

Cohen offers an enjoyable reading, which we do not see often in academic literature on migration. It is enriched with many detailed narratives of migration scenes in an almost memoirs style.

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