



ACADEMY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

Workshop Report

Rethinking Australian research on migration and diversity

Convenors:

Stephen Castles FASSA, Research Chair in Sociology, University of Sydney

Graeme Hugo FASSA, University Professorial Research Fellow, Professor of Geography and Director of the National Centre for Social Applications of Geographical Information Systems at the University of Adelaide

Ellie Vasta, Associate Professor, Centre for Research on Social Inclusion, Macquarie University

Dates: Monday and Tuesday 9-10 August

Venue: University of Sydney, Darlington Centre Boardroom

Background

Social science research on international migration and its significance for societies has grown rapidly since the late 1980s. Special research centres, journals and conferences have proliferated in Europe, North America and –more recently – in Asia, Latin America and Africa. An important trend has been towards closer links between migration and diversity research and broader social theory. The debate on the need to overcome methodological nationalism and to build transnational social sciences has involved much closer attention to human mobility and its role in shaping social relationships. Similarly, understanding of the political and practical significance of human mobility has grown, and migration researchers have advised national governments and international bodies such as the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM, 2003-5) and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD, an annual event since 2007).

A curious aspect of this trend has been the relatively low profile of Australian researchers.

Australian migration and multiculturalism research was highly developed and well-linked to policy

formation from the 1970s to the mid-1990s. But Australian social-scientific concern with these issues appears to have declined – no doubt partly as a reflection of changing political agendas which led to the abolition in 1996 of the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (BIMPR) and the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Several special university research centres quickly followed. Although some Australian researchers continue with important and innovative work on international migration and diversity, they play a limited role in national and international debates.

Aim and objectives of the workshop

The **central aim** of the ASSA workshop *Rethinking Australian Research on Migration and Diversity* was to explore ways of strengthening Australian research in this important field, and to think through strategies for reconnecting it both to mainstream social science and to international debates.

Specific objectives were to:

1. Examine trends in human mobility and policies at the global, regional, national and local levels, and to explore consequences for Australia.
2. Take up key social-scientific debates on such themes as solidarity and diversity, identity and belonging, multiculturalism and social cohesion, in order to explore their importance for contemporary societies.
3. Analyse specific dilemmas of migration and diversity research – notably the tensions between policy orientation and social-scientific relevance; and between interdisciplinarity and disciplinary excellence.
4. Think through strategies for improving the scientific quality, the institutional base, the connectedness and the relevance of Australian research on migration and diversity.

Participants

The convenors brought together a mix of older and younger researchers, including some who had played an important part in the pre-1996 migration research institutions, as well as those currently active in various areas of migration and diversity research. The workshop was interdisciplinary and brought together economists, geographers, sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists among others. Two overseas speakers (one each from India and New Zealand) were included to provide international perspectives. A prominent representative of the business community took part. Invitations were also issued to government officials, but their participation was prevented by the looming Election. Altogether, some 20 colleagues from a wide range of Australian higher

education institutions were invited as full participants (see Appendix 1). However, in view of the considerable interest in the topic, approximately 15 people from the University of Sydney and other New South Wales universities attended all or some of the Workshop as observers (Appendix 2). These included several doctoral candidates working in the area.

Workshop themes

The full Workshop Program is reproduced in Appendix 3. The following themes were covered:

1. Global and regional trends in international migration

Stephen Castles presented an overview of global migration trends, using new UN data. International migration has grown considerably since the 1970s, and some 214 million people now live outside their countries of birth. International migrants represent only 3.1 per cent of the world's population, while internal migration is much larger. However, international migration has major effects on certain origin and destination areas. Binod Khadria provided an analysis of migration trends in the Asia-Pacific region, showing how certain areas have become 'hubs', which attract large numbers of migrants, while others serve as 'hinterlands' that provide labour. Khadria argued that educational migration involved a transfer of both financial and human capital from poor to rich countries. Graeme Hugo examined the relationship between migration and development in the Asia-Pacific region, and argued that migration between Asia and Australia should be understood as a system based on circularity and reciprocity, rather than a one-way process. Migration could contribute to economic development of origin countries, but this did not happen automatically, but only if policy-settings on infrastructure, investment and governance were appropriate. Dr Fei Guo examined trends in migration to Australia from various parts of Asia, showing a shift from the idea of 'Australia as part of Asia' to 'Asians as part of Australia'. Migration has become more fluid, with a trend towards temporary and repeated mobility.

2. Australia's migration perspectives

The second session focused on the significance of migration for Australia. Siew-Ean Khoo provided an overview of recent migration trends, showing the rising importance of economic migration. Student migration has become particularly important – and many of the 650,000 overseas students in Australia also form part of the labour force. Sandy Gifford pointed to the global decline in refugee numbers –partly due to increasing restrictiveness by destination countries, as is shown by the rise in numbers of people displaced within their own countries. Surprisingly little is known about the background to refugee movements as well as about refugees' experiences in Australia – indicating an important research gap. Michael Humphrey analysed the relationship between the securitisation of

international relations and public hostility to immigrants and asylum seekers. Jock Collins showed how all these trends are undermining Australia's traditional model of permanent settler migration. The focus has shifted towards greater selectivity on the basis of employability and skills, with increased opportunities for temporary entry. The new situation makes it important for social scientists to re-examine long-standing ideas on the specific characteristics of migration and settlement processes in Australia, and to link their research to international debates on globalisation and transnationalism.

3. *Diversity and 21st century societies*

On the second day of the Workshop, the focus shifted to Australia's experience of diversity and multiculturalism. Ellie Vasta explored notions of social cohesion concerned with ensuring that immigrants and ethnic minorities integrate into the dominant culture. In contrast, Vasta's research conducted in London found that migrants and ethnic minorities who do not have a sense of belonging to the nation can still have a sense of commitment to the common good. Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham presented a grounded approach to understanding *everyday multiculturalism*, and discussed methodological issues in research of this kind. Everyday multiculturalism is concerned with the ways in which cultural diversity is experienced and negotiated in situations such as neighbourhoods and workplaces, and how social relations and identities are shaped and re-shaped in the process. Kevin Dunn provided detailed empirical data and maps on attitudes towards minority groups in the various areas of Sydney, and linked specific views and behaviour patterns with a range of social and economic indicators. Ashley Carruthers examined the everyday lives of Vietnamese, Lao and Cambodian communities in Western Sydney. These largely working class communities have experienced the sharp end of economic globalization. They have also, however, responded positively to some of the possibilities opened up by globalization, especially those presented by cheap communications and transport. The paper explored new forms of transnational connectivity, such as the emergence of transnational marriage markets.

4. *Advancing migration and diversity research in Australia*

The last afternoon was devoted to the topic of advancing migration and diversity research in Australia. Richard Bedford presented an overview of new issues and approaches in international migration research, leading to a discussion on how to apply these to the Australian context. Three prominent researchers (Ien Ang, James Jupp AM and John Nieuwenhuysen AM) then gave their views on the state of Australian migration research, reflecting on past experiences and ways forward. A final panel addressed the topic 'preparing Australian migration and diversity research for the future'. The panellists (Ghassan Hage, Neville Roach AO, Amanda Wise and Stephen Castles) pointed out

that Australia should be a pre-eminent site for exploring the significance of migration and diversity for economics, politics and society. Australian researchers have made major contributions to scientific understanding and policy formation. It is important to think through ways of maintaining and enhancing this role. Strategies to be examined include: improving networking and cooperation among researchers; overcoming disciplinary boundaries to achieve more holistic understandings of migratory processes; connecting Australian researchers to international social scientific networks; and building partnerships between researchers and other stakeholders (including governments, business, labour organisations and migrant associations).

Outcomes

1. The convenors of the Workshop plan to produce an edited volume, to be submitted to an academic publisher such as Allen and Unwin or Cambridge University Press. The steps to be undertaken to achieve this are:
 - The convenors will review the papers by the end of November, to select those thought suitable for publication (most of them we think).
 - Comments and revision suggestions will be sent to authors. We will request revised versions by the end of February 2011.
 - In parallel to the above steps, a book proposal will be prepared and submitted to an appropriate publisher.
 - A final book manuscript will be prepared by about April 2011.

2. At the Workshop, the idea was put forward that a new edition of *Australian Immigration: A Survey of the Issues* should be prepared. This work was originally published by AGPS in 1990. A second edition, edited by Mark Wooden, Robert Holton, Graeme Hugo and Judith Sloane, was published by AGPS in 1994. The work provided a very valuable overview of the 'state-of-the-art' in Australian migration research. An updated version would be an important resource for newer researchers seeking to work in the field. The convenors will explore the possibility of undertaking this project. If it seems feasible, we would involve many of the participants of the Workshop.

3. The convenors will prepare a Policy Brief summarising the main policy-relevant findings of the Workshop. This will be passed on to appropriate state and Commonwealth government agencies, and made publicly available through university websites.

Appendices

I. Full participants (funded by ASSA unless otherwise indicated)

Professor Stephen Castles (Sociology, University of Sydney)

Professor Graeme Hugo (Geography University of Adelaide)

Professor Binod Khadria (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) (funded by the Department of Sociology at the University of Sydney)

Dr Fei Guo (Business Studies, Macquarie University)

Dr Siew-Ean Khoo (Demography, ANU)

Professor Sandy Gifford (Refugee Studies, La Trobe)

Professor Michael Humphrey (Sociology, University of Sydney)

Professor Jock Collins (Economics, UTS)

Associate Professor Ellie Vasta (Centre for Research on Social Inclusion, Macquarie University)

Dr Selvaraj Velayutham (Sociology, Macquarie University)

Dr Amanda Wise (Centre for Research on Social Inclusion, Macquarie University)

Professor Kevin Dunn (Geography, UWS)

Dr Ashley Carruthers (Anthropology, ANU)

Professor Ien Ang (Centre for Cultural Research, UWS)

Dr James Jupp AM (Politics, ANU)

Professor John Nieuwenhuysen (Global Studies Centre, Monash University)

Professor Ghassan Hage (Anthropology, University of Melbourne)

Mr Neville Roach AO (Australia India Business Council)

Professor Richard Bedford (Geography, Waikato University, NZ.) (funded by the Department of Sociology at the University of Sydney).

2. Observers (not funded by ASSA)

University of Sydney:

Sociology

Dr Annette Falahey

Dr Laura Beth Bugg

Assoc. Prof. Christine Inglis

Dr Kiran Grewal

Doctoral students:

Chulyho Kim

Derya Ozkul

Malena Arias

Government and International Relations

Anna Boucher

Political Economy:

Professor Stuart Rosewarne

Geosciences:

Professor John Connell

University of Western Sydney (UWS):

Carol Reid (Education)

Greg Noble (Centre for Cultural Research).

Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

Professor Debal SinghaRoy.

3. Workshop Programme

Day 1

8.30 Registration

9.00 Opening: aims and structure of the workshop: Chair: Ellie Vasta

9.30-13.00 Session 1: Global and regional trends in international migration

1. The forces driving global migration (Prof Stephen Castles, University of Sydney)
2. Migration patterns in the Asia-Pacific region (Prof Binod Khadria, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
COFFEE BREAK (11.00)
3. Migration and development in the Asia-Pacific region (Prof Graeme Hugo, University of Adelaide)
4. Australia's migration relationship with the region (Dr Fei Guo, Macquarie University, Sydney)

13.00-14.00 LUNCH

14.00-17.30 Session 2: Australia's migration perspectives: Chair: Graeme Hugo

1. Trends in economic and family migration (Dr Siew-Ean Khoo, Australian National University)
2. Refugees and Forced Migration (Prof Sandy Gifford, La Trobe University, Melbourne)
AFTERNOON TEA (15.30)
3. Migration and Security (Prof Michael Humphrey, University of Sydney)
4. Rethinking the Australian immigration model (Prof Jock Collins, University of Technology Sydney).

18.30 Drinks followed by Workshop Dinner:

Thanh Binh Restaurant, 111 King St, Newtown, NSW 2042 - (02) 9557 1175

Day 2

9.30-13.00 Session 3: Diversity and 21st century societies: Chair: Stephen Castles

1. Do we need 'social cohesion' in the 21st century? (Dr Ellie Vasta, Macquarie University)
 2. Everyday multiculturalism (Dr Selvaraj Velayutham and Dr Amanda Wise, both Macquarie University).
- COFFEE BREAK (11.00)
3. The geographies of attitudes on diversity, multiculturalism and racism (Prof Kevin Dunn, University of Western Sydney)
 4. National Multiculturalism, Transnational Subjectivities (Dr Ashley Carruthers, Australian National University).

13.00-14.00 LUNCH

14.00-17.30 Session 4: Advancing migration and diversity research in Australia: Chair: Graeme Hugo

- 1: New issues and approaches in international migration research (Prof Richard Bedford, Waikato University, New Zealand).
- 2: PANEL DISCUSSION: The state of Australian migration research: Panellists: Prof Ien Ang, University of Western Sydney; Dr James Jupp AM, Australian National University; Prof John Nieuwenhuysen AM, Monash University.

AFTERNOON TEA (15.30)

Concluding Panel Discussion:

Preparing Australian migration and diversity research for the future

Chair: Ellie Vasta

Prof Ghassan Hage, University of Melbourne

Mr Neville Roach AO, Australia-India Business Council

Dr Amanda Wise

Prof Stephen Castles

Workshop Close: 17.30