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Introduction

Johannes Knolle and James Poskett

Migration is in the news every day. Whether it be the plight of refugees fleeing Syria, or the outbreak of Zika virus across Latin America, the modern world is fundamentally shaped by movement across borders. This volume brings together eight leading scholars from the arts, humanities, and sciences to help tackle one of the most important topics of our time. What is migration? How has it changed the world? And what does it hold for the future? Authors approach these questions from a variety of perspectives, including history, politics, epidemiology, and art.

The essays in this volume are based on a lecture series on ‘migration’ organised by Darwin College, Cambridge, in early 2018. Naturally, the choice of topic and timing trigger associations with the exceptional surge of often forced migration to Europe from 2015 onwards. During the organisation of the lecture series, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, further polarising public discourse on the subject. As a result, we now mostly think of migration as an exceptional event, something linked to political and humanitarian crisis. The motivation for a public lecture series on the topic was to redress the prevailing narrow debate surrounding migration. The contributions in this collection explore the many facets of migration, covering a wide range of topics, and getting away from a media focus on Europe and Brexit alone.

Traditionally, the Darwin lecture series is a public multidisciplinary event bringing together renowned scholars and public figures from the arts, humanities, and sciences. It appeared to us an ideal setting for examining migration from different perspectives. We also wanted to take a global approach, moving beyond the so-called ‘European migrant crisis’, and instead exploring different aspects of migration in regions ranging from Latin America to South

Asia. The hope was that there might be a common thread to migration as it appears in seemingly unrelated contexts. Indeed, the reader will find surprising parallels, for example, in how migratory birds and the spread of the Zika virus are influenced by globalisation; or in how new technologies are helping uncover the complexities of migration, both today and in the past. A number of contributors also emphasised the importance of addressing the legacies of empire and colonialism in order to understand migration today.

Most prominently, we wanted to make the case that migration appears to be the norm rather than the exception. Migration is not an exceptional ‘crisis’ to be solved but rather an inevitable feature of our ever-evolving world. That doesn’t mean that migration is effortless, or that there aren’t profound scientific and political questions posed by migration. Nonetheless, the starting point for any coherent approach towards migration cannot be a desire to erase it.

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In the opening chapter, the historian and broadcaster David Olusoga examines the history of African migration to Britain. Olusoga argues that we need to understand this as a long history, dating back as far as the Roman period, if not before. This, in keeping with the theme of the volume as a whole, helps demonstrate that the presence of people of African descent in Britain is not exceptional, but rather a product of over two thousand years of history. Building on this argument, Olusoga highlights how many of the things people consider to be culturally “British” are in fact the product of global migrations, often with roots in the world of slavery and empire. From drinking tea to eating fish and chips, the British are a people – like many others – profoundly shaped by a long history of migration.

Chandran Kukathas, Dean and Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Political Science at School of Social Sciences, at the Singapore Management University, then looks at the

relationship between immigration and freedom. Typically, restrictions on immigration are seen as a restriction on the freedom of the migrant. However, Kukathas argues that in fact we should see restrictions on immigration as limiting the freedom of citizens in the host country. As Kukathas points out, much of the legislation on immigration restriction – both historically and today – is actually designed to restrict the freedoms of existing citizens.

Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll's contribution is based on a special performance lecture exploring art and migration. Chair of Global Art History at the University of Birmingham, von Zinnenburg Carroll is also an active artist. The performance lecture and accompanying analysis explores the experience of immigrants in the United Kingdom's immigration detention centres. We have become used to migrants being figured as an abstract mass and our legal system has evolved to keep them from public view in deportation facilities. von Zinnenburg Carroll wants to take the migrant out of this shadow, both in her art and academic work.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, then looks at the intersection of refugee movements and the more general phenomenon of human mobility today. He argues that migration is an intrinsic aspect of social and economic development, and that the current moment is not especially different from any other since Second World War. Grandi also reminds us that Europe is actually only marginally affected by the arrival of refugees when compared to countries neighbouring those undergoing crisis. The world's poorer countries, such as Bangladesh, are often left to take in the majority of refugees, as in the recent case of Rohingya Muslims fleeing persecution in Burma. Grandi argues that an adequate response to large-scale population flows can only be found in predictable international cooperation

Kavita Puri, a British Broadcasting Corporation journalist, examines the history of migration during the Partition of India. Following the withdrawal of the British Empire in 1947,

the subcontinent was split along religious lines into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. This resulted in one of the largest migration events in human history, with over ten million people moving between the two new countries. Many others, in the wake of the violence that followed, travelled to Britain, where they sought to rebuild their lives. Drawing on oral histories and interviews, Puri reconstructs the personal stories of Partition, examining this troubling history from different perspectives.

Eva Harris, Professor in the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley, explores the migration of the dengue and Zika virus across continents, around cities and within the human host. In bringing together recent research results, Harris shows how viral evolution of diseases can be understood as the continued migration of mutations across time and space. Examples from Latin America highlight how an multidisciplinary approach across medicine, biology, and data science – combined with engagement of local communities – can overcome challenges to human health.

Venki Ramakrishnan, Nobel laureate and President of the Royal Society, then examines the relationship between migration and science. Ramakrishnan makes the case that science is a fundamentally international endeavour. Drawing on historical examples from the Middle East, India, Europe, and the United States, Ramakrishnan traces the way in which scientists have collaborated and migrated historically. He also reflects on his own career as a migrating scientist: born in India, studying and working in the United States, and now a group leader at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Britain. Along the way, we learn about how Ramakrishnan conducted the research for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2009, for the discovery of the structure of the ribosome.

Finally, Iain Couzin, Director of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology, explores different examples of animal migration, from schools of fish in the ocean to insect swarms in the sky. Couzin shows how the coordinated response of a huge number of animals can emerge

from surprisingly simple rules at the individual level. He also explores how the use of new technologies, like drone tracking, as well as data science and even virtual reality, can help to reveal how organisms come together to face complex problems during migration across the globe.