

HAWKE EU CENTRE FOR MOBILITIES, MIGRATIONS & CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Global Tipping Points: Migration Summit (1-2 November 2016)

ROUNDTABLE 1

The role of research in anticipating the global migration crisis

To what extent did research on migration force the conditions and consequences of the recent global asylum and refugee crisis? Can future consequences be extrapolated from present worldwide conditions? What are the complex interdependencies and long-term lock-ins arising from the migration crisis? What is the role of research in assisting States, corporations, universities, cities, NGOs and individuals react to, and cope with, the 'wicked problems' of the current migration crisis – now and in the future?

Panellists – Dr Kate McMillan, Dr John Cash, Professor Loretta Baldassar, Dr Melanie Baak, Professor Pal Ahluwalia

Chair – Professor Anthony Elliott

Dr Kate McMillan from Victoria University of Wellington brought a New Zealand perspective to the roundtable discussion, suggesting three areas that research might focus on. She highlighted that New Zealand is in a slightly unusual position internationally as it has little irregular migration. Mostly it is people over staying visas or applying on false ground.

As well as this New Zealand doesn't yet have populous politics, but that's not to say they won't ever. She questioned what would be the pathway to see whether they do go down that root? New Zealand gives voting rights to non-citizens after one year's residence. This may affect politicians' ability to make a populous decision. It also becomes more difficult for entrepreneurial politicians to reach out to publics with fear-based approaches. As well as this, she flagged New Zealand's high immigration rate.

She also highlighted the debate between Indigenous peoples, settlers and immigrants. The treaty and understanding the different positions has made people more aware of the effect of ethnic diversity on the public. She discussed the role of leadership and rhetoric, what is the kind of language of affect and emotions and how this can be used in populous ways.

New Zealand is one of five countries that grant voting rights to non-citizens. All people who are on a visa that doesn't require them to leave by a certain date may vote. This gives them value as a member of the political community.

Dr John Cash from The University of Melbourne recognised migration as one of the many factors that impacts on feelings of insecurity. He suggested that only some forms of migration develop insecurity and that insecurity generates anxiety and psychological defences. Defences against anxiety aren't solely psychological they are culturally supported. We know that both cultural repertoires are available. To take one example, splitting disadvantaged youth in France have had projected upon them fears and anxiety. He said this creates a vicious cycle. In turn, people react with rage, which sees heightened insecurity is hostile to migrants, who are the most insecure.

Dr Cash suggested that in the past European cities *sought* migrants. If you chose to go somewhere then you were contracted to be part of that city. This changed in the 19th century. Borders were firmed, and migrants become the potential deviant and hazard. A way of supporting this culture repertoire is to attempt to bypass the nation state. Thinking about research that informs degrees of autonomy for cities to grant inclusions of migrants.

Professor Loretta Baldassar from The University of Western Australia explored her research on migration, families and caregiving and the role of unintended consequences. She explained that Australian refugee and migration policy includes notions of independent adults, which narrowly defines family and in turn unwittingly negatively impacts on care networks, in particular in limiting mobility rights. She discussed the right of grandparents to be involved and suggested that the process of refugee application often strips refugees of mobility rights. This often unintentionally diminishes family care and support networks for the people who need these networks the most and can inflict greater economic and social costs and harm as a result. The current schemes in the Australian system provide rights for spouses etc. but are lacking for extended families. This can lead to increasing rates of visa overstay. Contributory visa cost \$50,000 and non-contributory visa has a 30-year queue. She said the economic outcomes of immigrant parents are typically poor according to 2016 productivity inquiry.

Professor Baldassar suggested that Australia is on the verge of the global care chain phenomenon. Romanians benefit from mobility rights so they can play tag with each other and move around to share the load of care. This can't happen for the Philippines because they don't have mobility rights, which creates a terrible situation of domestic workers.

Dr Melanie Baak from The University of South Australia highlighted that the role of research is salient in evaluating and improving policy surrounding refugee resettlement in Australia. She illustrated this point by talking about a Sudanese boy who in 1989, was conscripted to the army as a result of religion and conflict. After nearly 20 years this young man was offered the opportunity to be resettled

in Australia as part of the 'lost boys'. In 2002, this man arrived in Australia full of hope. He faced many challenges, like education and had a problem finding a job, like a lot of refugees. Dr Baak said this man is now her husband. Since being in Australia, Sudan dissolved into conflict once more. She said he watches on with technology with a sense of hopelessness. He is bombarded with a constant stream of calls for help and that burden falls on those living in the diaspora. Dr Baak argued that the sense of hope and dreams has disintegrated replaced instead with hopelessness and helplessness.

Professor Pal Ahluwalia from The University of Portsmouth discussed some key questions; what does a critical migration study look like? The research and object of research is so blurred. What is the role of social science? When does a settler become a native? He explored these questions by looking at the Rwandan situation and argued that one of the interesting things that the role of the aid system is predominantly western.

Discussion

- Jeff Crisp – has been a bit surprised to see the extent to which academia has legitimised the idea of the refugee crisis. He doesn't think anyone anticipated and predicted it. It's astonishing that the EU with their resources was not able to be predict it.
- Carla Wilshire – is there something in looking a little more at the use of technology and language in discourses in refugee communities?
- Loretta Baldassar – new technologies are certainly another complex layer of community networks that need to be included in the research. What surprised us is the migration expands care networks as a result of technologies. Mobility expands networks of care and support, even forced migration. There is an understanding that technology diminishes face-to-face, but they can be used together.
- John Cash – one of the focuses of research should be on the host communities.
- Pal Ahluwalia – even though UNHCR can see it, it needs to be acknowledged by the host countries.
- Michael de Waal – how different waves of immigration have been thought of in Australian and a sense of belonging?
- Pal Ahluwalia – will there ever be a time where I'm not referred to as a hyphenated Australian? I don't think so.
- Gwenda Tavan – asked whether within academia there is a problem with the concept of immigration studies because we are reinforcing this idea that migration is something beyond the border. In the Australian context that is troubling, we talk about them as if they are beyond the core. How

do you feel about that and the place of migration studies?

- Pal Ahluwalia – more interested in what does critical migration studies look like. Have to decentre the idea of migration itself. If there were no border there wouldn't be migration.
- Claire Higgins – asked John Cash, do you have models of how this has worked in other parts of the world?
- John Cash – a large part of the problem is how we view the nation state. Cities and voluntary groups are a better locale to play out a different kind of recognition. It's only part of what's happening and it's shifting the ground to a universal way of doing things.
- Anthony Moran – the difficulties for social science are in influencing politics. It wouldn't matter in a way how much the policy was incorrect or wrong its like shouting into the wind. Will continue but it doesn't necessarily stop what's happening at the top. Lot of evidence of groups being welcoming to refugees.
- Bruno Scholl – the number of times the nation state comes up and it's usual to think of the welfare state. It's not just about them thinking they're one of us, its about thinking they're entitled to a lot.
- Alison Phipps – there's something troubling about the arms trade and giving.
- Melanie Baak – wanted to project cycle of where moneys going and how ideas are moving. Juxtaposition between then and now there is a 'refugee crisis' because they are coming to where we are, where the power is. Although statistically the numbers might be the same, this is why it is different.