Introduction

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Migration research has expanded significantly during the last three decades. Nowadays there are many graduate programmes around the world (both at the master's and doctoral level) in which students can specialize on migration-related topics as distinct as integration, discrimination, forced migration, labour migration and development. Many of these programmes are discipline specific (for example, Anthropology, Demography, Economics, Geography, History, Law, Political Science and Sociology), while others (probably the majority) follow an interdisciplinary perspective. At the same time many academic outlets, including several migration-specific journals, have come into existence in order to disseminate this increasing stock of research.

The key policy implications of migration research suggest that this interest in migration will keep expanding in the future. Immigrant receiving countries are constantly looking for better ways to attract the most talented individuals to fill labour shortages in the high skilled sector and low skilled workers that may allow for the provision of services at a lower cost. At the same time there is a growing preoccupation in these countries about the impact of population growth as a result of immigration and the possible impacts of immigration on the provision of public services, local culture and the labour market outcomes of their citizens. These countries are also concerned about the arrival of new asylum seekers from the increasing political instability of some countries in the developing world. Developing countries, on the other hand, want to exploit the opportunities that arise from their citizens moving abroad. For instance, channelling remittances for more productive uses is a policy priority in many countries of the developing world. These countries also worry about losing their best through the brain drain process. Finally, many developing countries want to look after their citizens abroad, and protect them against human rights abuses. For these, and many other reasons, we can expect migration to remain an important issue in policy discussions.

The permanent importance of migration for policy in the developed and developing world, in addition to the large stock of migrants around the world (over 200 million), suggest that learning more about migration research is a great investment for anyone interested in shaping the future of the world we live in. That is where this handbook becomes handy.

2 *Handbook of research methods in migration*

This handbook is an interdisciplinary collection, which can be used as a learning tool and reference for anyone interested in migration research methods, including students, academics, policymakers and other professionals. The chapters of the handbook maintain an introductory level of discussion in all topics and provide readers with the references necessary to go deeper into the topics.

The handbook is divided in seven parts. The first part has two purposes. First, it introduces and defines key concepts in migration research. For instance, the chapter by Castles (Chapter 1) makes a distinction between the concepts of methods and methodology, Bartram (Chapter 3) explores the concepts of variation and conceptualization, while Hoerder (Chapter 4) discusses the methodological consequences of using terms such as transnational, transregional, translocal and transcultural. The second purpose of this first part of the handbook is to introduce different perspectives on migration research. Iosifides (Chapter 2) offers an interesting introduction to the critical realism perspective, while Delgado Wise and Márquez Covarrubias (Chapter 5) provide the perspective of the political economy.

The second part is in essence the core component of the handbook with regards to introducing the reader to a range of techniques and approaches in migration research. The techniques introduced range from those that are qualitative in nature such as the interviewing techniques by Sánchez-Ayala (Chapter 6) and migration histories by Carling (Chapter 7), to the quantitative discussions of Lozano and Steinberger (Chapter 8), Funkhouser (Chapter 9), Carletto et al. (Chapter 10), Skeldon (Chapter 11) and McKenzie and Yang (Chapter 12). Lozano and Steinberger introduce readers to the methods used by economists to explore the nature and impacts of immigration, including immigrant assimilation, immigrant selection and impact on receiving labour markets. Funkhouser explores the potential for using panel data in migration research, a key discussion given the increasing availability of longitudinal data on migrants and their families. Carletto et al. discuss sampling techniques, and survey instruments to collect data on migration. This discussion is expanded to the macro level by Skeldon, whose chapter highlights the difficulties in interpreting the data on migration that is contained in international databases. Finally, McKenzie and Yang introduce natural experiments and policy experiments in migration research. The experimental 'route' proposed by these authors is a novel and resourceful way to conduct quantitative research in migration given that it avoids many of the existing econometric challenges.

The third part of the handbook moves into interdisciplinary territory. Bose (Chapter 13) explains the advantages of interdisciplinary approaches, including triangulating research strategies. Boccagni (Chapter 14) makes a strong case for mixed-methods approaches in the study

of transnationalism, while also highlighting the need for further methodological elaboration. Finally, Gamlen (Chapter 15) delineates a mixed-methods framework for exploring the policies of migrants' sending states.

In the fourth part, researchers present ways of exploring different migration topics based on their research projects. One common idea across some of these chapters is to explore migration in relation to current events, themes and innovations. For instance, Crush et al. (Chapter 16) discuss the use of several internet networks such as Facebook to collect data on the diaspora from African countries. Meanwhile, Warner (Chapter 17) discusses the methodology of a project exploring the impact of environmental change on migration, another very current topic. This part of the handbook continues with a discussion of the challenges in researching undocumented migration (Chapter 18 by Anderson et al.) and asylum seekers (Chapter 19 by Oxford). Finally, Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo present evidence on the variability of remittances and the importance to account for this fact in order to avoid biases in statistical results (Chapter 20).

Towards the end, the handbook turns into a guide, instead of just a discussion of research methods and projects. It starts this guidance by introducing some practical issues in migration research, including ethical challenges that researchers encounter while doing research with vulnerable migrants (Chapter 21 by van Liempt and Bilger). In this part there is also a discussion of the logistics of conducting a migration research project by Siegel (Chapter 22). In the sixth part there are two chapters (Chapter 23 by Law and Chapter 24 by Bloemraad) that discuss the process of research from the personal perspective of the researchers, putting emphasis on the process of converting research into published work. So, this guidance works very well as it provides information on how to conduct an academic investigation (including ethical and logistical issues), followed by a discussion of publishing those research findings.

Finally, the handbook concludes with a testimony from several researchers with regards to their research experiences and the methodological challenges that they encountered along the way (Chapter 25 by Parker Talwar, Chapter 26 by Chin and Chapter 27 by Shih). This final part of the handbook is intended to provide a more intimate view on the experience of being a migration researcher. Therefore, it adopts a more relaxing and storytelling point of view, while at the same time making explicit reference to all the methodological challenges that are present during migration research. As such, this handbook starts with a fairly dense discussion of research concepts and approaches, moves into specific techniques and practices and then shifts to actual research experiences. The goal of these transitions is to expose the reader to the diverse universe of migration research methods.