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Hervé Le Bras, *L'Age des Migrations*. Paris: Autrement, 2017. Figures, infographs and bibliography. 151 pp. €17.90 (pb). ISBN 9782746744639.

Review by Roger Waldinger, University of California, Los Angeles.

Migration reigns at the top of the news wherever one goes. In Europe, where these pages have been written, events in the Mediterranean are the source of unending controversy: today's news involves the humanitarian vessel, the Sea Watch 3, whose captain has brought the boat to shore on Lampedusa with 42 shipwrecked immigrants, the frenetic opposition of the Italian government notwithstanding. A few thousands of miles away, in my own country, a photograph of two Salvadorans, father and daughter, drowned while trying to enter the United States by swimming across the Rio Grande, dramatized the ever-growing human costs of the Trump administration's hardline policy. Whether these events represent a migration crisis in the sense of a sudden increase in outward bound flows, or whether they represent a crisis of immigration in the sense of a sudden hardening of boundaries and hearts—one searches desperately for insights into this ubiquitous dilemma.

For some preliminary illumination, readers can turn to *L'Age des migrations*, authored by the prolific French demographer, Hervé Le Bras. The book is short, containing roughly 120 pages of text and 30 figures and infographs, with a very limited bibliography and based entirely on aggregate statistics and secondary sources. But for those very reasons, this is also a book that could calm the nerves of everyday Europeans and Americans suffering from migration anxiety—assuming, of course, that they were willing to read and think.

Le Bras sends those readers several messages. First, one has to carefully distinguish between the motivation for migration and the means to make it happen. Interest in international migration is widespread: Le Bras cites a worldwide Gallup poll indicating that 13 percent of the globe's population would definitively leave their country for another if they possessed the means. And therein lies the rub as it's precisely the means that are often lacking. Interest in migration is greatest in the poorest or the most conflict-ridden countries—but these are also the places where the resources required for migration, whether involving finances, skills, or the papers that make border-crossing possible—are most likely to be missing. When they leave, moreover, the migrants' choice of destinations is affected by factors that go considerably beyond the purely economic. Path dependency comes into play, as the migrants gravitate towards the former colonial power or some other country where, due to history, a common language is shared.

Second, before getting too excited about *immigration*, the residents of the rich countries of the west--and in particular, Le Bras' French compatriots--should start realizing that theirs have become countries of *emigration* as well. That observation follows from the point spelled out above: the rich countries' residents often enjoy the financial and human capital that so greatly facilitate international mobility; moreover, they possess passports that readily open international doors. Yet since migration occurs when it is good for the movers, the differential rewards of migration generate a hierarchy among the rich countries as well. Migration among doctors is far more likely to lead from the continental to the UK side of the English Channel than the other way around. Relative to Canada and Australia, however, the UK traffic in doctors is more likely to be outward bound. And needless to say, the greatest net recipient of doctors is the USA.

Third, the scale of *emigration* needs to be assessed when factoring in the impact of *immigration*, a point that Le Bras brings home forcefully to his French readers. Since 2008, France has received a positive balance of roughly 150,000 immigrants a year, a number far more modest than the figures that entrepreneurial politicians have bandied about to mesmerize French voters. But conveniently for them, those politicians have also neglected the negative side of the balance--representing a new exodus of roughly 115,000 French citizens a year. In other words, globalization has produced population circulation into and out of France, with the result that the number of French citizens living outside of France is almost as great as the number of non-citizens residing in France itself.

There are numerous other insights to be found in this book, including a thumbnail review on environmental migration in which Le Bras concludes that the strictly environmental contribution to international migration is unlikely to be large. The many figures are also artfully presented, providing the reader with ample information to ponder. Overall, however, the contribution of this book is proportionate to its size, that is to say, very modest. While Le Bras very skillfully exploits the aggregate data that he presents, one can only push those data so far; generalities too often dissolve under discussion of particularities--these particular immigrants go here, others move there; description usually takes precedence over explanation. The book's scope is also too global to provide the depth that will satisfy specialists in France. And this reader also searched in vain for a single, sustained argument. Hence, in today's age of migration--when not just migration but migration scholarship is burgeoning--*L'age des migrations*, while an intelligent contribution, doesn't keep up with the intellectual competition. Readers of H-France in search of meaningful guidance should look elsewhere.

Roger Waldinger
University of California, Los Angeles
waldinge@soc.ucla.edu

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