

Unwanted People and Desired Citizens

Contemporary Attitudes, Challenges and Perceptions
of Migration and Integration



Edited by

**Cezary Smuniewski, Andrea Zanini,
Cyprian Aleksander Kozera, Błażej Bado**

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Introduction

Since humanoids descended from the trees and adopted an erect posture, they began to move more. In fact, contrary to our culturally acquired lifestyles, we are biologically designed to move – not to cultivate the same plot of land annually or to sit in front of computer screens. Indeed, pre-Neolithic-revolution humans were constantly on the move, and the boundaries between families and tribes were fluid and ephemeral, especially considering that only several million humans existed worldwide. It's only in the most recent epoch – a mere fraction of human history spanning the last 12,000 years – that we began to define our fields, territories, lands, provinces, countries, and states with recognizable and enduring borders. In modern times, these delineations are regulated by state apparatuses, underscored by both law and, when necessary, physical force. As a result, the illegal crossing of these man-made borders is penalized.

Integration is a multifaceted endeavor that plays a pivotal role in the narrative of migration. As newcomers seek refuge or better prospects in unfamiliar lands, the process of melding into the social fabric becomes paramount not just for the migrants but for the host communities as well. While integration demands adaptability and cultural acclimatization from migrants, it equally requires understanding, openness, and receptivity from the indigenous population. Properly managed integration can lead to rich cultural exchange, innovation, and economic benefits. Yet, if overlooked or mishandled, it may result in societal fractures and missed opportunities for both the newcomers and their host societies. In the European context, fostering a successful integration strategy is both a challenge and a necessity, ensuring that the dynamism brought by migrants complements the existing societal structures and adds to the collective strength of the continent.

Yet, numerous individuals find themselves constrained by these realities, particularly those who are forcibly displaced. Meanwhile, host populations often feel invaded and exploited. Thus, migration – an age-old catalyst for change – engenders tensions and conflicts. In present-day Europe, migration towards the continent is a prominent topic among policymakers, media commentators, and the general public. This issue is frequently manipulated for individual and political gains. Many perceive migration as an existential threat, leading to its securitization. Numerous media outlets and political parties cry “immigrants ante portas” evoking imagery of outsiders at the gates, reminiscent of the “savage” Carthaginian leader Hannibal threatening Western idyllic communities.

This book seeks to provide an objective and balanced perspective on migration and its associated phenomena, aiming to foster more informed and rational discussions about the nature and future of migration.

We hope this book offers both enlightenment and perspective.

Wishing you a thoughtful read.

Cezary Smuniewski
Andrea Zanini
Cyprian Aleksander Kozera
Błażej Bado