

WAVE, SUSTAINING ECONOMY, EASTERN, THOUSANDS, NON-EU, CRIMINALS

# THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MIGRATION

EXILED, MASS INFILUX, INNOVATION, AGAINST THE LAW, FLOODING, SUSPECTS



## Can an Anthropologist be 'objective' in relation to migration?

In Anthony P. Cohen's, 'An Anthropologist's view' objective knowledge is seen simply as facts and statistics which further emphasises the notion of dehumanisation against migrants as there is no emotion behind the images shown in the media. The migration process is too personal to just be objective. In Cohen's reading the approach between the lawyer's diplomatic and objective perspective differs greatly to that of the anthropologist's. It is the notion of the 'Emic' and 'Etic' perspectives that are to be understood and taken into account when analysing a culture. To be able to view it from the inside out but also the ability to step out and look in regardless of external influences.

## Cultural relativism or simply racism?

It is through constant attacks from the media and far right sympathisers that migrants are depicted negatively, consequently the public associate all unpleasant sentiments towards migrants, to their cultures as well. Migrants are being dehumanized by the media whilst at the same time the public is being desensitised of their humanity which, not only propagates outright racism but creates a deep sense of fear towards all that is different and not 'culturally relative' to their own. Anthropologist Ernest Gellner defines cultural relativism as *"...a theory which asserts that there is no absolute truth be it ethical, moral or cultural, there is no meaningful way to judge different cultures because all judgements are ethnocentric"*. Stating that there is no true way of depicting cultures without having one's own personal experiences and cultural views seep through in the description. Its comparative approach allows scope for critiques of the ethnocentric and universal arguments that surround the subject of migration.

**What is migration?** Migration is the movement of people across political boundaries. This movement of people can either be explained as voluntary migration, where people make a choice to leave their country, or as involuntary migration where people no longer have a choice and for their own safety have to leave. This is also called 'impelled migration' where individuals are not explicitly forced out, but leave because of critical situations such as warfare, political difficulties or religious oppression.

## Who are the true culprits of Xenophobia?

Labelling is the theory of how an individual's behaviour and identity are used as a means to classify them. This notion of a cultural stereotype features heavily when speaking of xenophobia in terms of migration. In Jonathan Crush and Sujata Ramachandran's 'Xenophobia, International migration and Development' they state that *"xenophobia will continue to undermine the rights of migrants and bedevil efforts to maximise the development potential of migrants"*. The fact that the current migration crisis has not been dealt with in an economic and optimistic way has led to the distrust of political individuals. Political parties and the social media are the true culprits of xenophobia as it is through these authoritative figures that migration is represented negatively.

IMMIGRANTS, CONTAMINATING, ILLEGAL, CULTURAL DIVERSITY, TERRORIST

Sara Di Noia, Practicing Anthropology, University of Sussex