

STAYING – OBSTACLES TO MIGRATION

Migration studies have developed models and theories in abundance for explaining mobility. However, often it is not people in motion that call for explanation, but those who stay – even though they could profit by leaving their homes and settling elsewhere. This volume will draw together theoretical and empirical work that illuminates the obstacles that get in the way of spatial mobility and/or interrogates the presumption that migration is always the most rational response to challenges or opportunities. It will include and invites contributions from across the humanities and the social sciences. The following is an indicative outline of the themes covered by the volume:

1. There's no place like home: emotional obstacles

Often it is strong emotional ties with their home country, with the people they know and the ways of life they are used to that keep people from leaving. Contributions will investigate why emotional ties can outweigh other motivations and what effect they have on decision-making.

2. Iron curtains: institutional obstacles

People in former East Germany or present-day North Korea cannot leave, because they were/are literally mured in. Institutional obstacles to migration need not be as physical as a wall in order to be effective. Western nations have restrictive immigration policies, historical polities tied their people to the land they were working on. Papers will study how institutional frameworks (negatively) affect the mobility of individuals and collectivities and how they are perceived by those who are affected.

3. Transaction costs: economic obstacles

Mobility is expensive – and it used to be far more expensive than it is now. Countless people stay(ed) because they could not afford the passage, a rail ticket or the airfare, because transaction costs made the economic benefit of migrating questionable. Now, immigration to rich countries is artificially made more expensive owing to restrictive legislation and the activity of people traffickers. This section will approach the impact of economic and financial issues on mobility.

Proposals for contributions (750 words) are invited by 1 May 2010. Please e-mail your proposal to Dr Michael Sommer: sommerm@liv.ac.uk.

We also encourage proposals for monographs from scholars working on this theme.