

**Title—The Unsettling of Europe: How Migration Reshaped a Continent**

**Author—Peter Gatrell**

**Year—2019**

Categories: Immigration, Politics, Colonialism

Place: Europe

Time: 1945-Present

Argument Synopsis:

Gatrell's *The Unsettling of Europe* provides a comprehensive history of migration in Europe from the Second World War to the present, in order to demonstrate that migration deserves a central place in modern European history. Gatrell seeks to bring to life the contributions migrants make to a country, arguing that the varied experience of migrants is often ignored in the debate surrounding migration. In terms of organization, he divides his book into five chronological sections, covering the periods 1945-1956, 1956-1973, 1973-1989, 1989-2008, and 2008-2019. The time span within each section is fairly loose, often going forwards or backwards in time. Each part contains between four and five chapters, some focusing on a specific region or country and others focused on various themes. These themes include decolonization, public opinion, managing migration and asylum in the European Union, and memory. The theme of the book overall is influenced by the network approach that migrants often have stakes in more than one place simultaneously. Gatrell attempts to place today's levels of migration to Europe in a historical perspective. He suggests that internal (domestic) and transnational migration has been of equal importance in shaping the economic and society of both Western and Eastern Europe.

Dominant political debates about migration in Europe make claims of migration on an unprecedented scale. Gatrell reveals that large population movements have been the norm in Europe since the end of the Second World War, highlighting the steady stream of Eastern Europeans leaving the Soviet bloc from the 1950s on. He identifies decolonization as a significant factor in both promoting and shaping postwar European migration patterns. Many migrants responded to decolonization by heading for metropolises in the West, such as the influx of migrants from the Indian subcontinent to Britain through Commonwealth migration. The end of the twentieth century saw even more displacement caused by wars in former Yugoslavia and waves of economic immigration. Gatrell makes extensive use of a wide variety of sources, including memoirs, fiction, photos, maps, and documentary and feature films—this helps create a full fleshed image of European migration.

Gatrell concludes by arguing that Europe should embrace immigration and diversity, which have made the continent what it is. He posits that migrants contributed substantially to European economic growth in the latter half of the twentieth century. This study contributes an important European dimension to comparative migration studies. Overall, he argues that Europe is a migrant-receiving country and as such its leader must address challenges (such as negative public opinion) and exploit opportunities (the economic and cultural contributions of migrants to the host society).

Key Themes and Concepts:

- European governments are only partially successful at classifying migrants and channeling them through the system accordingly
- Migration can be precipitated by the formation of new nation-states when the majority seeks to establish imagined communities through the othering process
- Migrants form self-contained communities in host countries as a means of security, not only national pride