

Migration, Culture Conflict and Crime

Edited by

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ADVANCES IN CRIMINOLOGY

Migration, Culture Conflict and Crime

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I. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

1 Introduction

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The history of human societies – indeed the story of life – may be told as the history of migration. Animal and plant species migrated from oceans to land. The earliest primitive tribes were nomads – migrants by profession. Early human species radiated to all parts of the huge continents they inhabited. Natural barriers were overcome. Mountains, oceans and deserts have been traversed by migrant groups for thousands of years.

The evolution of social and economic life did, however, work against the nomadic way of life, as we know. Food gatherers figured out how to farm the land, allowing them to stay in one place. Villages, towns, and cities were gradually established. The concept of ‘foreigner’ inevitably emerged from the organization of humans into distinct groups, largely those of towns or cities that developed their own unique life styles, religions and cultures. Discourse between separate societies was minimal. It was only a matter of time, though, that the natural human need to exchange goods and services – that is to say commerce – led to the development of new, more complex societies where diverse cultures blended and often clashed. There are few, if any, societies today whose cultures do not reflect the adventures and sagas of past meetings of cultures. Modern societies are surely the richer for this. But they also, in many cases, bear a burden of history in which the clashes of cultures have produced violence sometimes of indescribable proportions, sometimes buried in the mythical past, and too often rekindled into a perpetual legacy of recriminations, often violent.