Causes and Consequences of Human Migration
An Evolutionary Perspective

Migration is a widespread human activity dating back to the origin of our species. Advances in genetic sequencing have greatly increased our ability to track prehistoric and historic population movements and have allowed migration to be described both as a biological and as a socioeconomic process. Bringing together the latest research, Causes and Consequences of Human Migration provides an evolutionary perspective on human migration past and present. Crawford and Campbell have brought together leading thinkers who present examples from different world regions, using historical, demographic, and genetic methodologies and integrate genetic, archaeological, and historical evidence to reconstruct large-scale population movements in each region. Other chapters discuss established questions such as the Basque origins and the Caribbean slave trade. More recent evidence on migration in ancient and present-day Mexico is also presented. Pitched at a graduate audience, Causes and Consequences of Human Migration will appeal to anyone with an interest in human population movements.

MICHAEL H. CRAWFORD is Professor of Anthropology and Genetics, and Director of the Laboratory of Biological Anthropology, at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA.

BENJAMIN C. CAMPBELL is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, USA.
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An Evolutionary Perspective

MICHAEL H. CRAWFORD
University of Kansas

BENJAMIN C. CAMPBELL
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
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Contributors

Victor Acuña-Alonzo
Molecular Genetics Laboratory, National School of Anthropology and History, Mexico City, Mexico

Mark Aldenderfer
School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, University of California, Merced, CA, USA

Carlos Eduardo Guerra Amorim
Departamento de Genética, Instituto de Biociências, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Lindsay Barone
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, USA

Rodrigo Barquera
Molecular Genetics Laboratory, National School of Anthropology and History, Mexico City, Mexico

Ramiro Barrantes
Escuela de Biología, Universidad de Costa Rica, San Pedro de Montes de Oca, Costa Rica

Monica Batistapau
Chemistry Department, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, USA

K. G. Beaty
Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA
Mwenza Blell  
Department of Anthropology, University of Durham, Queen's Campus, Stockton, UK

Benjamin C. Campbell  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, USA

Loredana Castri  
Dipartimento di Biologia evoluzionistica sperimentale, Area di Antropologia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Michael H. Crawford  
Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

Bartholomew Dean  
Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

Eric J. Devor  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City, IA, USA

Alvaro Díaz-Badillo  
Department of Genetics and Molecular Biology, Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, San Pedro Zacatenco, México D.F., Mexico

Rocío Gómez  
Department of Toxicology, Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, San Pedro Zacatenco, México D.F., Mexico

Carolina Carvalho Gontijo  
Departamento de Genética e Morfologia, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade de Brasília, Brazil

J. B. Hirbo  
Department of Biology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, and Department of Genetics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA
List of contributors

John M. Janzen
Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

Anne Justice
Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

Raquel A. Lazarin
Department of Forensic Sciences, George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA

Philippe Lefèvre-Witier
CNRS, Toulouse, France

María de Lourdes Muñoz
Department of Genetics and Molecular Biology, Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, San Pedro Zacatenco, México D.F., Mexico

Donata Luiselli
Dipartimento di Biologia evoluzionistica sperimentale, Area di Antropologia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Lorena Madrigal
Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, USA

Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith
Department of Anatomy, Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand

Phillip E. Melton
Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Western Australia, Australia

Igor Mokrousov
Laboratory of Molecular Microbiology, St. Petersburg Pasteur Institute, St. Petersburg, Russia

Felix Moos
Professor Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

María Concepción Morales-Gómez
Department of Genetics and Molecular Biology, Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, San Pedro Zacatenco, México D.F., Mexico
List of contributors

M. J. Mosher
Department of Anthropology, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, USA

Dennis H. O’Rourke
Department of Anthropology, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, USA

Flory Otárola
Departamento de Antropología, Universidad de Costa Rica, San Pedro de Montes de Oca, Costa Rica

Gerardo Pérez-Ramírez
Department of Genetics and Molecular Biology, Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, San Pedro Zacatenco, México D.F., Mexico

Silviene Fabiana de Oliveira
Departamento de Genética e Morfologia, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade de Brasília, Brazil

Davide Pettener
Dipartimento di Biologia evoluzionistica sperimentale, Area di Antropologia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Christine Phillips-Krawczak
Molecular Bioscience Department, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

Eduardo Ramos
Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Teotihuacan, Edo. de México, Mexico

A. Ranciaro
Department of Genetics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Lilian Rebellato
Department of Geography, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA, and Department of Anthropology, University of Oeste do Pará, Santarém, Brazil

Ernesto Ruiz
Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, USA
Moses S. Schanfield  
Department of Forensic Sciences, George Washington University,  
Washington, DC, USA

Jay T. Stock  
Department of Biological Anthropology, University of Cambridge,  
Cambridge, UK

Mark Stoneking  
Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Department  
of Evolutionary Genetics, Leipzig, Germany

Eric Sunderland  
University of Bangor, Bangor, UK

S. A. Tishkoff  
Department of Genetics and Department of Biology, University of  
Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Jonathon C. K. Wells  
Childhood Nutrition Research Centre, UCL Institute of Child  
Health, London, UK

Dixie West  
Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Research Center, Univer-  
sity of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

William I. Woods  
Department of Geography, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS,  
USA

Kristin L. Young  
Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, USA
We are all products of human migration. Some of us migrated during our lifetimes from one part of the world to another, and had to learn different cultures, languages, diets, and systems of education. Others have parents who were forcibly relocated at different times, particularly during World War II and its sequelae, and experienced displaced persons camps, disease, and violence, and were uprooted to various corners of the world, such as the Americas and Australia. Yet others have ancestors who migrated hundreds or thousands of years ago and have lived in relatively undisturbed households for many generations. Finally, some people originated in Africa and migrated within the continent or were forcibly relocated by wars and the slave trade.

The authors of this volume are migrants and describe the human condition from their unique migratory experiences. Each author has a complex personal history of migration, often occurring in different generations, cultural traditions, and languages. All of the authors currently residing in the Americas are either recent migrants or have descended from ancestors who relocated to the Americas generations ago. Several of the authors have experienced extensive migration and relocation within their lifetimes, as the following examples show.

Felix Moos came to the United States from Germany following World War II. He survived that war only to find himself fighting in the Korean Conflict for his new homeland. As for many of his generation coming from a devastated and exhausted Europe, cultural agility and the will to adapt to new circumstances, different values and life patterns, different education modes, and different languages became essentials to survival and made him, like the multitudes of other migrants throughout history, by definition, more multicultural and multilingual.
Michael Crawford immigrated to the United States as a teenager from China with stopovers in displaced persons camps in Tubabao, Philippine Islands, and in Uranquinty, Australia. He can be viewed as multicultural having grown up speaking Russian, being educated in a French/English school in Shanghai, grade school and high school in Australia and Seattle, Washington, and undergraduate and Ph.D. at the University of Washington.

Lisa Matisoo-Smith’s life history illustrates the complexity of migration and ethnic origin. Her father was born in Estonia, but left Estonia as Russians occupied the country in 1944 during World War II; he was a refugee in Germany until after the war when he moved to the United States. Her mother’s ancestors were on the first boats arriving in the Americas in the 1600s. Lisa was born in Honolulu, grew up in Japan (8–18 years), moved to mainland United States to go to the University and met her Kiwi husband in London – on her way to an archaeological dig in France. She moved to New Zealand 24 years ago and is now professor, Department of Anatomy, Otago University.

The authors who currently reside in the Americas share a common event – the migration of their ancestors from recent times to several hundred years ago. All of us view the world in terms of our personal history, the movements and origins of our ancestors and families and our common experiences resulting from: religious persecutions, wars, economic incentives, and search for employment, power, and novelty. All humans are the product of this ubiquitous experience that we and our ancestors collectively share.

This volume represents the fruits of an interdisciplinary conference on human migration held at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, March 1st and 2nd, 2010, organized by Michael H. Crawford and Benjamin Campbell and funded by several programs and institutions: the Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and Culture, Center for Gobal and International Studies, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Laboratory of Biological Anthropology, Spencer Museum of Art, Latin American Studies and Department of Anthropology of the University of Kansas. Evogen, Inc., a diagnostics company in Kansas City, Kansas, contributed funding for the conference. More than 100 scholars attended the formal portion of this two-day conference. A “brain-storming” session was held on the third day with discussion concerning the development of a migration consortium and an evaluation of potential projects that this multidisciplinary group could initiate and support.
An international group of speakers and participants assembled for this conference, representing 12 countries and 24 institutions worldwide. In addition, this conference featured a strong multidisciplinary approach to human migration with the participation of cultural anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, demographers, biological anthropologists, molecular geneticists, and human biologists. After the conference, a book prospectus was submitted for consideration to Cambridge University Press. Peer reviewers of the book prospectus, solicited by the Press, recommended the addition of several chapters to cover sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania and to consider the disease consequences of migration.

The purpose of this conference was to examine the causes and consequences of human migration from a multidisciplinary perspective. Human migration has figured prominently throughout human history and increasingly so in today’s world with transnational migration and the large scale movement of refugees and other forced migrants. The impacts of migration are felt in all aspects of our lives from jobs to the flow of money, development of immigrant communities and kinship, and national politics. As such, migration is a multidimensional process of interest to all of the social and biological sciences, ranging from economics to sociology, political science, anthropology, human biology, and medicine.