

Session 3:Theories of Migration

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Autumn Course:Migration and Development

Migration and Co-Existence 2

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In social sciences, students are taught that they must start any inquiry with a puzzle or a question, whatever the topic of study may be.

Of course the way which that question is posed or framed is dependent upon the discipline: and the construction of hypotheses is almost always driven by disciplinary consideration.

Historian

Demographer

Sociologist

Economist

Geographer

Psychologist

Political scientist

Anthropologist

Legal scholar

Why people migrate?

- 1) Is migration a problem to be solved?
- 2) Causes and consequences of migration

Note:

- ✓ Decision to move->better life-chances-> move out of your society of origin->life in new countries
- ✓ Income, employment and other opportunities?

Five sets of theories

- ① Functionalist theories: Push-Pull and Neoclassic
- ② Historical-structural theories
- ③ Putting migrants first: agency, identity and perpetuation of migration
- ④ Network, transnationalism and migration theories
- ⑤ Migration transition theories

Functionalist social & neoclassical theory

- Major causes are economic
- Push-pull models :distance,
- like a market (in micro economics)
- positive phenomenon leading to equilibrium with greater equality

VS

Historical-structural theories

- Various structures constrain individuals enhancing disequilibria as powers are unequally distributed and reproduce inequality
- Exploitation of cheap labour serving the interest of the wealthy with brain drain

Neoclassic and Push-Pull Models

Merits: useful, all factors in decision making

Ravenstein (1885):

- **part of development**
- Major cause **economic**: supply & demand based on gravity and geographical differences

Lee(1996):

- **Plus and minus** factors
- Causes: distance, physical barriers, immigration laws etc. and personal factors

Passaris (1989):

- Added political oppression, **demand for labour**, availability of land, political freedom

Demerits: descriptive, short of explaining roles & interaction of factors

Listing factors w/out analysis:

- **no framework to analyse and explain causes**
- Inability to explain return migration
- Simultaneous occurrence of immigration and emigration
- Over deterministic on causes and effect of demographic, environmental and economical factors (Eastern Europe)

Neoclassical & human capital theories

- ① Part of **development process**
- ② Geographical differences in the **supply and demand of labour**: low wage rural surplus to high wage urban industry
- ③ Migrants; **individual, rational actors maximising cost-benefit** (wages, financial/social)
- ④ Maximise returns from migration matches costs
- ⑤ Investment (like in education) to increase wages and human capital productivity (knowledge & skills)
- ⑥ **Migration** optimises allocation of production factors
- ⑦ Convergence of two wages and conditions -> equalising factor cost->lowering migration

Wrong assumptions of neoclassical model

1. Unrealistic assumption: migrants=rational actors (?) in decision to maximise income & utility
2. Migrants possess perfect knowledge of the market in destination countries
3. Perfect & accessible market for capital, insurance and other
4. Ignores age, gender, knowledge, social contracts, preferences and perceptions of the outside world: each migrant is not isolated socially (kins, friends, community members) and has individual aspiration and capability.
5. Costs and wages rule markets -> perfect markets?
6. Migration has its own drivers in their own right.

Note: incapable of explaining real-life migration patterns. Migration is a patterned process, Individual choice is influenced by historical experiences, family community dynamics, colonial ties, with structured constraints; social strata, access to money and information, power inequalities and culture.

Historical-structural theories

- ① Migration is a manifestation of **capitalist penetration** and unequal terms of trade between developed and underdeveloped countries
- ② Individual migrant does **not have a free choice** and is constrained by structural forces, hence **forced** migration; global political economic system, mechanisation of agriculture, concentrated land ownership and exploitation of peasants.
- ③ Rural population ->**cheap labour of urban proletariat for the benefit of urban employers and wealthy countries**->expansion of capitalist ->inequalities in power and resources->migration is a cause of underdevelopment.
- ④ **Intellectual root is Marx's 'Dependency Theory'** (Latin America in 60s) followed by world systems theory(70s-80s) blaming core capitalist nations and multinational corporations for emergence of underdeveloped periphery->**globalisation theory**

H-S Theories: Globalisation theory(1)

- ① Cross-border flows of money, goods, democratic values, cultural and media products and **people**
- ② **Globalisation** spurred by revolutionary advancement of IT technologies and transport networks ->production outsourcing, commuting and networking (non-migratory mobility (commuting, business trips and tourism))
- ③ Selective cross-border migration: only those with financial capital and education, eligibility for visas and with social capital for linkages and opportunities abroad
- ④ Nations are still strong in migration:
 - ✓ Policies for cross-border movements and non-migration policies related to citizenship, public order, labour market, taxation, social services
 - ✓ Control of migration and **differential treatment of transnational class structure of migrants->irregular migrants**

H-S & Segmented labour market theory (2a)

- ① States, corporations & employment agencies maintain capitalist system-> key causes and drivers of migration
- ② **Demand driven** by structural changes in economic and labour market within **advanced economies**->determine demand for particular labour skills; **high skilled** and **lower-skilled** manual workers for manufacturing, staff services enterprises (catering, cleaning, care etc.)
- ③ Dual(segmented) labour market: high-skilled and lower-skilled **structurally embedded** the modern capitalist economies->widening gaps due to skills
- ④ Institutional mechanism to control segmented labour market **Outsourcing vs migration(Qatar)**

H-S theories: **Segmented** labour market theory (2b)

- ① Segmentation by race and gender
- ② Global cities with growing segmentation of high paid skilled workers in finance, management and research(primary market) and poorly paid workers who serve their needs (secondary market)
- ③ Primary market for skilled: human capital, majority ethnic group, male gender, regular status vs unskilled
- ④ Secondary market: disadvantaged by lack of education, skills, gender, race, minority status and irregular legal status reinforced by neoliberal reforms and deregularisation of labour markets

Note: useful to understand migration under full employment while irregularity can be exploited by employers

Critique of historical-structural approaches

- ① **Unrealistic** to assume migrants unilaterally as victims of global capitalism
- ② Merely victims of global capitalism with no choice in migration for survival=**deterministic view** doesn't tally with actual making of choices and improving livelihood via migration
- ③ Equally unrealistic as neoclassical theory
- ④ Romantic nostalgic notion of pre-industrial revolution of peasant life without migration but with substantial odds

Migrants' Agency Micro Level: New Economics and Household Approaches

Critical response to Neoclassical Approach

- ① Not individual but **household makes decision**
- ② Migration -> risk sharing behaviour of Household to diversify household income -> minimising income risk like droughts, floods and social insecurity
- ③ HHs' access to capital for investment and insurance (risk sharing amongst HH) Originates from sociologists and anthropologists approach on livelihood approaches
- ④ Migration -> response to relative deprivation (not absolute)
- ⑤ HH=Human agency **proactively** improve livelihood via HH's economic diversification (Mexican migrants to US)

Migrant Agency Meso Level (1):

Migration Network Theory

- ① Migrants **themselves** create and maintain social ties with other migrants and with families and friends back home & non migrants in destination countries
-> emergence of social networks=social structures->facilitate further migration w/migration industry
- ② Formation of **critical mass** of migrants in destination countries->social networks shape migration patterns/paths
- ③ Migration network=location specific **social capital** in origin and destination countries ->reduce economic, social and psychological costs of migration->self-perpetuating as a **diffusion process**

Migrant Agency Meso Level (2): Transnational and Diaspora Theories

- ① Deterritorialised nation-states->transnational communities with multiple identities
- ② Transnational business, political and cultural activities: multinational corporations vs grass-roots initiatives by migrants and home country
- ③ New phenomenon but old ones: Jews, African slaves, Lebanese, Maghrebis, Turks, Greeks, Indian and Chinese diaspora communities
- ④ Homeland, strong long-sustained ethnic consciousness, solidarity of co-ethnic transversal links

Migrant Agency Meso Level (3):

Migrant systems Theory and Cumulative Causation

- ① A form of exchange between countries or places, such as trade, tends to engender other form of exchange like human migration
- ② Migration depends on prior links like colonialism, trade, political and cultural ties, investment etc. UN military involvement-> Korean and Vietnamese migration
- ③ Culture of migration based on successful migration; staying home->failure
- ④ Special niche and feedback mechanism (reputations) i.e., Japanese gardeners, Chinese cook etc.

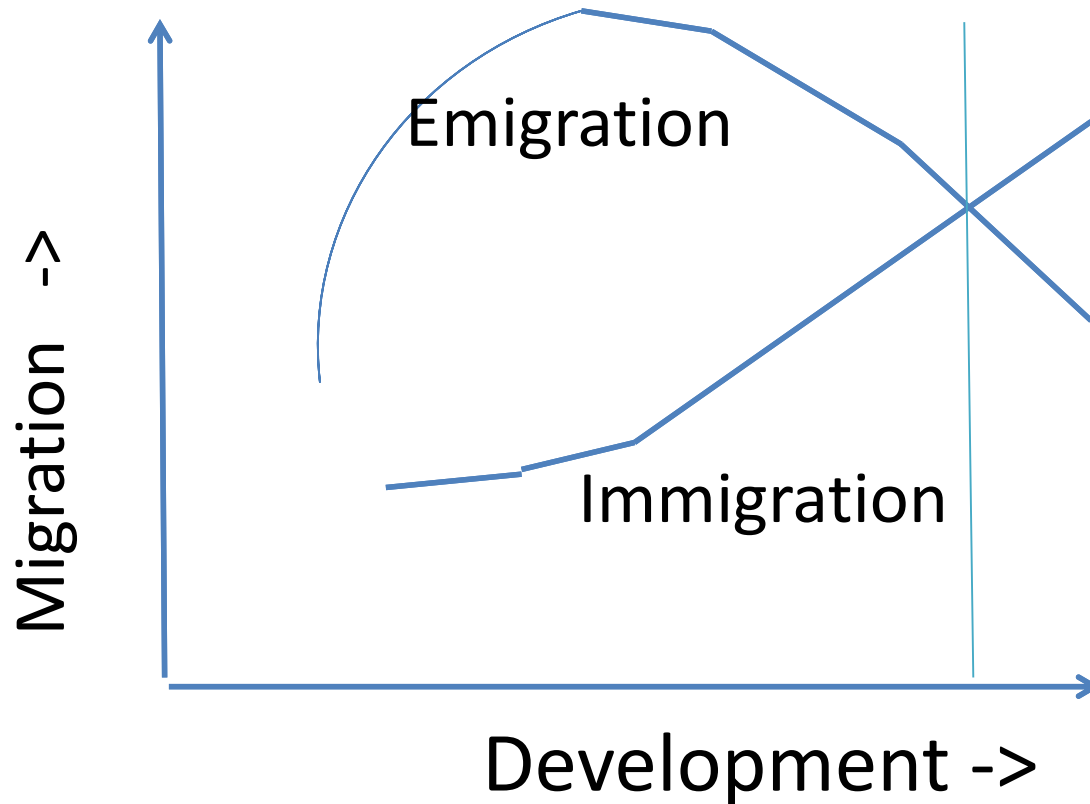
Migration Transition Theories: Macro Level Structural Causes of Migration

- ① Structure of labour market; Inequality; Interstate relationship; migration policies
- ② Outgrowth of geographical inequalities
 - common to functionalists and historical-structural theories->migration problem->solve by reducing inequality and promote development in origin countries->solve the problem->increasing migration->why =only well-off families migrate(many poor trapped in cities)->process of development, social transformation, globalisation
 - Advancing development->increase in migration?-> expansion of individual mobility as development deepens -> developed nations up with net immigration

Structure, Capabilities, Aspirations and Migration

- Transition theories are less strong in explaining the causes of individual people migrating more with increasing development?
- Individual migration depends on capabilities and aspirations to move (individual capabilities to migrate and awareness driven aspirations -> freedoms: enhancing choice in opportunities overseas) -> both decreases as development advances in origin countries
- Migrate to search jobs matching the skills and education in light of specialisation and segmentation of job markets (against push-pull, functionalists and historical-structure theories)

Development Transition from Emigration to Immigration Countries?



The Migration Transition de Haas(2010c)

Conclusion (1)

- Passive or predictable response to poverty and inequality (P-P models, neoclassical and historical-structural theories)
 - Development process tends to drive migration by increasing capabilities and aspirations to move
- Internal dynamics and proactive agency of migrants form immigrant communities, social networks, new transnational identities=>facilitate migration in segmented job markets
- Gatekeepers and bridgeheads?
- Role of the government initiating and shaping movements

CONCLUSION (2):

Attempts to theorise migration is futile

- ① Yes – patterns and regularities exist!
- ② Various theories operate at different levels and focus on different aspects of migration
- ③ Neoclassical theories-> useful for migration of highly educated within and amongst wealth countries
- ④ Historical-Structural theories and New Economics of labour migration and livelihood approach for migration under poverty and oppression
 - Exploited but remittances benefits migrants

Conclusion (3)

- Theoretical approaches->policy choices
 - Neoclassic ->open borders, freedom of migration ->efficiency, converging wage levels and opportunities
 - Historical-structural: serving interest of 'capital' by depressing wages levels and bargaining power of unions and also cause of brain drain->black markets, smugglers and recruitment agents
 - New economies and livelihood approach: state control does not work. Instead social protection and access to credits, insurance, pensions

UG PM Theresa May's statement

- https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/oct/06/reality-check-is-theresa-may-right-about-immigration?CMP=share_btn_link