

The theorizing in International Migration: from classical theories to transnational approach



Dr.Salim Daha*

Eloued university, (Algeria),

salim-daha@univ-eloued.dz

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Abstract:

Classical theoretical analyses of migration were confined within the national-state framework that ignored new transnational societies. It made the state the unit of analysis and all social interactions had to conform to its political and geographical boundaries.

Many researchers now, including Peggy Livett of Harvard University and Nadya Orsky of Yale University, argue that the activities of current migrants have crystallized many of the links and relationships between their countries of origin and the country in which they are located. They have acquired a social life that transcends the borders of countries, while the political and cultural borders between countries remain strong. This type of migration is called transnational migration.

key words: explaining theories; transnational migration; international migration; State borders; The wages.

Introduction

The study of international migration has witnessed many methodological developments by changing the unit of analysis so that the migrant, his living conditions and the motives for undertaking the migration journey are no longer the basis of the study, and migration is no longer a journey of departure and arrival. It has become an inter-process that includes the sending environment, the receiving environment and the transit environment, in addition to the legal system regulating these movements. The movement of migrants is no longer in one direction, but the frequent movement of people - especially movement for work - has become a necessity for all countries concerned.

* Corresponding Author

Attempts to formulate a general theory to explain international migration began in the early fifties of the twentieth century, with the writings of researcher Myrdal. Myrdal studies the causes of migration from the countryside to the city, and migration between countries focusing on the economic and social differences between the sending and receiving environments, especially the disparity in individual income and the desire to improve living standards. In addition, several intermediate variables are added, such as the activity of migration networks that include those who benefit from the deportation of people, as well as the first migrants who spread the culture of migration and attachment to the receiving country.

This study presents a theoretical explanations for the movement of people between places and countries. Accordingly, we can ask:

- **What is the content of the classical theories that explaining international migration? What are the new approaches to understanding the effects of international migration?**

First: Macro-level theories to explain international migration

The macro-level theories tha explain international migration focus on the state as the main controller of migration interactions. There are several theories fall under the macro-level:

1-The theory of world systems to explain migration

The world systems theory makes the international system and the state the basis for explaining international migration. Wallerstein explained migration as one of the links between the colonizer and the old colonies. Migration represents one of the secretions of cultural, linguistic and administrative relations that existed during the colonial era. This reason made the nature of the international system during the twentieth century. The world system is controlling the orientations of immigrants in many regions of the world, with the continued flow of immigrants from independent countries towards the countries that were colonizing them¹.

There are two aspects to explaining international migration during the last century, the first is the growing power of the capitalist system (the core countries), and the widening gap between them, and the underdeveloped peripheral countries, which made migration flows increase from the periphery to the center. The second is the consolidation of the principle of national sovereignty that accompanied the emergence of the international organization and the United Nations Charter's

emphasis on the necessity of respecting the sovereignty of states and not interfering in their affairs. This has made movement between countries subject to the principle of sovereignty. This reality has prompted countries to adopt a legal and institutional system that controls the movement of people, such as bilateral and international agreements related to regulating the movement of people, or to establish international organizations concerned with protecting migrants and their rights, such as the International Organization for Migration and the International Labor Organization.

Todro focused on economic factors in explaining international migration. The global economy is now managed by a group of global cities whose economic exchanges exceed the volume of many sovereign states such as San Francisco, Tokyo and London. Capitalist states have established financial and productive mechanisms that ensure the continuous flow of goods, services and people to and from them, especially the movements of highly skilled people².

2- The economic theory to explain migration

Todro focus on the factors that attract immigrants. He studied most notably wage levels, as there are countries that have an abundance of labor but suffer from low wages, or that these wages do not allow for reasonable purchasing power due to inflation, and other countries that have lack labor but are characterized by high wage levels. As well as, migrant moves between low-wage countries and high-wage countries³. This transition is subject to several criteria based on the personal project of movement. The immigrant compares his original wage in his country with his potential wage in the country of immigration and moves when the expected gain from the difference in wages between the two countries is greater than the expected costs of the migration process. Likewise, the return of competencies is subject to the level of expected gains from returning to the country of origin compared to the gains achieved from staying abroad.

Therefore, the way for governments to control migration is to adopt policies that affect the expected gain from migration between the two countries (reducing job opportunities through reliance on technology, raising wages in the source countries...).

Researcher Bloom followed the same approach in his focus on the role of the state in changing migration, as he saw that families and households in developed countries enjoy government care that guarantees that their incomes will not fluctuate in the future. These countries rely on the future market that guarantees the sale of crops at high prices even if

they decline in global markets, by the state paying the difference in prices in favor of productive families. In poor countries, families face their fate alone without state care, which prompts these families to recruit some of their members in migration projects towards developed countries to ensure future incomes that will compensate for the difference when they are exposed to financial losses resulting from the deterioration of agricultural crop prices⁴.

The national state remains the main cause of the migration process and has the right to stop it based on its right to enjoy sovereignty, but over decades of international attempts to regulate or even stop migration, international migration has remained a well-established reality that responds to the right of individuals to move from one place to another in search of a better life.

Second: The partial theories explaining international migration (Micro-level)

The owners of these theories provided different explanations from those who preceded them, as they studied international migration starting from the migration community itself, so they made the migrant the unit of analysis in their study, then the migration network, then the migration institution. This made the study of international migration more profound and led researchers to multiple results that contributed to formulating more effective policies in regulating migration.

1- Institutional theory to explain migration

A researcher Tylor believed that immigrants usually prefer to go to countries where they have relatives and friends because these connections guarantee them low costs for migration and also provide them with a certain degree of reassurance. Then they start their new life with less trouble. It is natural that the first immigrants have experiences and expertise in the country of immigration that new immigrants seek to benefit from, and from them they weave networks of social, family and even sectarian relations⁵.

Over time, the networks develop into historical institutions that benefit from migration, supervised by former immigrants with experience in dealing with government policies and how to ensure the flow of immigrants and thus the continuation of their sources of profit. Some immigration institutions devote themselves to voluntary work to protect the rights of immigrants and improve their conditions, while the work of some of them is limited to forging visas and passports and secretly

transporting and housing immigrants, which has created a black market for immigration.

2- The theory of the duality of the labor market

Labor migration occupies a significant space within the writings and research concerned with the study of migration, considering that the search for better incomes represents the main reason for migration and the first motivation towards it. The labor market consisting of immigrants has become a parallel source of labor for the countries receiving immigrants, over time

A- Inflation in the labor pyramid

As for the local labor market in the receiving countries, several labor unions and organizations are active that defend workers' rights, especially the issue of raising wages, insurance and retirement. These issues put pressure on employers and push them to improve salaries at the bottom of the local labor pyramid. This process continues at the upper levels of the pyramid, which leads to an increase in the cost of improving salaries in general⁶.

In European countries, resorting to the parallel labor market that includes immigrants is the most effective way for employers to avoid the cost of improving wages because immigrant workers accept poor working conditions such as low wages, the absence of health conditions for work, and weak levels of insurance.

B- Labor market instability

The social mobility that occurs in host societies - with individuals moving from lower to higher levels of living - is an important factor in reducing supply, as large numbers of people exit the labor market, especially at the bottom of the pyramid. This phenomenon also exists in the labor market for immigrants, as immigrants start working for a salary, then seek to emulate developed societies and live at standard levels (buying a house, education, buying land, consuming goods, luxury...). The problem is the instability of the labor market, especially the bottom layer of the pyramid that exits the labor market, which prompts employers to compensate for this shortage in labor by employing new immigrants⁷.

C- Economic duality

Economic crises are a characteristic of the capitalist system. These crises occur periodically and often result in recession and the cessation of the production process for some time. Capital is usually not affected, while workers pay the price of the cessation of work by being deprived of their fixed incomes. When the crisis ends, employers face the dilemma of

marketing again, not to mention renewing production structures, which prompts them to follow an austerity policy focused on reducing the wage bill and thus reducing the number of local workers on the one hand, and employing migrant workers who accept low wages⁸.

D- Demographics of labor supply

The local labor market in European host countries is always heading towards contraction, due to the general population decline and the improvement of living conditions, and the rise in welfare levels among local residents, which makes them withdraw from the lower levels of work. There are now professions specific to immigrants that local citizens refuse to work in, such as construction work and harvesting crops⁹. The imbalance between the declining supply and the increasing demand, especially in the agricultural sector, pushes towards exploiting the parallel labor market represented by migrant workers.

There is an inherent and chronic demand for foreign labor in advanced central countries, this demand has made immigration a dynamic process that does not stop.

3- Cumulative Causation Theory

Within the partial perspective of explaining international migration, researcher Douglas Massey presented a different explanation for migration based on the idea of self-expansion, where he found that the accumulation of migration experiences and experiments generates additional demand for new immigrants.

Douglas Massey outlined six factors that make migration self-expanding¹⁰:

A- Income Distribution: Household incomes from immigrant remittances are usually directed to improving the living conditions of their members, but this category of families always has a tendency to increase these incomes, and thus increase the number of immigrant individuals within these families, which makes them allocate part of immigrant remittances to support and assist new immigrants.

B- Land Distribution: Rural communities are concerned with land and its exploitation in general, and they spend their savings to increase the size of their properties, especially land, so that prestige and social status increase directly with the size of the land. Poor families in rural communities strive to emulate rich families in owning land, which makes migration the most appropriate means for both categories to achieve this goal, as most of the incomes of immigrants in the countryside are spent on agricultural expansion.

C- Agricultural production system: Families with income from migration spend most of this income on developing the production process by updating machines and pesticides and employing technology. These updates reduce the labor force, which makes the surplus in the labor market tend towards migration.

D- Immigration culture: Usually, the immigrant begins his life in the country of independence focusing on achieving material gain as the main goal of migration, then integrates into the advanced society, so his behaviors, tastes and way of life change, which makes him attached to the host country and its culture. This makes him decide to migrate several times and may stay there permanently.

E- Regional distribution of human capital: Usually, continued migration leads to the accumulation of human capital in the host countries and in cities more than others, which creates saturation in these countries. This prompts immigrants to search for new destinations to achieve their migration ambitions, and return migration may become the best option when the sending countries provide infrastructure and encourage investment in rural areas.

F- Social Subjective classification for immigrants:

It is difficult for immigrants to get rid of the status of foreigner in the sending countries even if they obtain citizenship. Migrants are usually confined to certain areas and in certain professions that local citizens are above, so these professions become the exclusive domain of migrants (such as construction and crop harvesting), which creates a permanent demand for migrants in these sectors. Massey sought to prove that migration generates migration by focusing on the migrant himself, his preferences, and the circumstances of the migration process that accompany him. This argument provides an explanation for the approach of resistance in the migration community and its incompatibility with the regulatory policies adopted by states, which are often coupled with great pragmatism (utilitarianism) on the part of states.

Third: Transnational Approach Interpreting International Migration

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the studies concerned with interpreting international migration expanded the scope of interpretation by multiplying the units of analysis, as the migrant, his family, his community of origin, and the receiving community were addressed, unlike previous stages in which studies made the state the only unit for analyzing and interpreting the reasons for migration from

one country to another. What distinguishes current studies is the focus on the movements and activities of migrants more than on the motivations for their migration, and the means of returning them to their countries of origin.

Transnational migration communities have become a reality that international actors must interact with and invest in, rather than seek ways to get rid of. Many researchers, including Peggy Livett of Harvard University and Nadya Orsky of Yale University, believe that the activities of current migrants have crystallized many links and relationships between their countries of origin and the country in which they reside. They have acquired a social life that transcends the borders of countries, while the political and cultural borders between countries remain strong. This type of migration is called transnational migration. While classical analyses of migration were confined within the national state framework that ignored new transnational societies, it made the state the unit of analysis and all social interactions must correspond to its political and geographical borders¹¹.

The social sphere and transnational society

The authoritarian distribution of values, social life no longer corresponds to the borders of the state, as religious movements, economic processes and professional networks include many countries. It is no longer possible to study social trends from a national state perspective, but it has become difficult to separate individual interests from universal interests. Technological developments in communication media have led to the openness of societies to each other, which has led to the reshaping of social structures, beliefs and cultures. From here, transnational studies emerged to discuss, research and describe the new dynamics at the level of international migration, where current migrants weave many links between the receiving and sending environments. These studies have developed new methodological tools to study these links (religious, cultural, economic, political). Based on this approach, researchers Glick Schiller and Szantom Blanc defined the social field as: "A series of social networks and relations where ideas, practices and references are exchanged, organized and transformed"¹².

The transnational field is based on the combination of certain characteristics in the sending society and other characteristics in the receiving society. These characteristics combined give migrants the ability to interact and move within this field. Accordingly, we can establish an acceptable definition of the transnational social field as: "*The framework of permanent and evolving social relations and practices that*

cross national borders and form a migration society with characteristics and features different from the sending society and the receiving society".

Researcher Glick Skiller believes that the social field includes individuals, institutions, organizations and experiences across multiple levels. These levels create types of identities within the same social field¹³.

Researcher Morawska also proposed in 2003 to define migration as (the restructuring of the dynamics of societies)¹⁴. While Guarniz in 1997 and Laudlot in 2001 called it "transnational social transformations." As for the researchers Sorensen and Fogolnig in 2002, they preferred to call the phenomenon "transnational mercenary", all of this to indicate the links, relationships and interactions that immigrants and their children establish between the sending environment and the receiving environment¹⁵.

The researcher Faist in 2002 confirms that changes in the level of spatial links and temporary settlement of immigrants from different topographies¹⁶:

A- Rapid dispersion: in which immigrants achieve weak integration in the receiving environment and short-term links.

b-Transnational exchanges of benefit: strong integration of immigrants and short-term links in the receiving environment.

c- Transnational networks: in which immigrants achieve weak integration but long-term links in the receiving and sending environments.

d-Transnational communities: in which immigrants achieve strong integration in the receiving and sending environments and long-term links in the receiving and sending environments.

The immigrants build their ways of being and their ways of belonging within the transnational community differently. The customs and traditions of existence are related to the practices and relationships that the individual builds within the social field in which he exists by chance or fate, which is usually represented in his original society. The extent of the success and continuity of these practices and relationships determines the fate of the individual and the possibility of his remaining in the social field or leaving for another one. The individual's customs and traditions are linked to the social practices within the society in which he lives, either by rejection or acceptance. If these practices are consistent with the values of society, the individual will achieve a high degree of belonging to it.

Conclusion

Theoretically, migration is the movement of individuals between countries for various purposes. Studies concerned with explaining international migration have developed the fields of explanation by multiplying the units of analysis, as they have addressed the migrant, his family, his original community, and the receiving community, unlike previous stages in which studies made the state the sole unit for analyzing and explaining the reasons for migration from one country to another. What distinguishes current studies is the focus on the movements and activities of migrants more than on the motives for their migration and the means of returning them to their countries of origin.

Now, migration is a transnational movement that goes beyond the state's controlled area and sometimes conflicts with the state's legal and political system. The idea of permanent movement between countries has become entrenched with the exacerbation of the phenomenon of globalization based on the free movement of goods, services, capital and people between countries

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