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FACTORS DRIVING GLOBAL MIGRATION PATTERNS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

AUTHORED BY - ARYA MISHRA

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Introduction

Human migration refers to the movement of people from one place to another, either temporarily or permanently, with the aim of settling in a new location. Although migration is commonly viewed as an individual pursuit to improve one's life, it has always been primarily a collective endeavour that results from social, economic, and political changes. In the current era of globalization, migration has become increasingly politicized, and the substantial social, economic, and political changes it brings about have significant impacts on both the origin and destination countries. Consequently, it is crucial to have a more thorough understanding of the reasons behind migration, including the factors that motivate and drive people to migrate.¹

International migration has become a major global phenomenon, with millions of people moving from one country to another each year. There are many reasons why people migrate, and scholars have tried to understand the causes behind these movements. One key question that arises in this context is whether people are pushed or pulled to migrate. This research paper aims to explore this question and provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors that lead people to migrate internationally.

International migration has become a prominent feature of the modern world, with millions of people crossing borders every year. The reasons for international migration are complex and multifaceted, involving a range of factors such as economic, social, political, and environmental conditions. Individuals relocate for various reasons such as pursuing better employment prospects, seeking to reunite with family members, or engaging in academic endeavours. In contrast, some people relocate to evade conflict, persecution, terrorism, or infringement of human rights. Moreover, there are those who migrate due to the unfavourable impacts of natural calamities, climate changes, or other ecological factors. Understanding these factors and their interactions is essential for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners who aim to address the challenges and opportunities that come with international migration.²

¹ Deniz S. Sert & Tansu Ceyla Erenler, "Theories of Migration: Reasons for Mobility", *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS*, 2020, available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69625-6_8-1 (Visited April 3, 2023).

² "Migration", available at <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/migration#:~:text=Some%20people%20move%20in%20search,disasters%2C%20or%20other%20environmental%20factors> (Visited April 3, 2023).

This research paper aims to achieve four key objectives related to international migration. Firstly, it seeks to identify the primary reasons that people migrate internationally, and how these factors vary across different regions and cultures. Secondly, it aims to explore the role of demographic factors such as age, gender, and family status in international migration, and how they interact with other drivers and constraints. Thirdly, the paper seeks to examine the theories of international migration policies and their impact on migration patterns at both the national and international level. Finally, it will discuss the consequences of international migration for sending and receiving countries, in terms of economic, social, cultural, and political impacts.

By addressing these objectives, the paper will provide a comprehensive analysis of the complexities of international migration. It will contribute to the existing literature on this topic, shedding light on the diverse factors that drive migration, the role of demographic factors in shaping migration patterns, the impact of migration policies, and the consequences of migration for both sending and receiving countries. The findings of this research can inform policy discussions and actions related to international migration, helping policymakers to develop more effective strategies for managing the movement of people across borders.

Research Objectives

- To identify the primary reasons that people migrate internationally, and the variance in these factors across different regions and cultures.
- To study the role of demographic factors such as age, gender, and family status in international migrations, and the interactions of these factors with other drivers and constraints.
- To understand the theories of international migration policies and their impact on migration patterns both at the national and international level.
- To discuss the consequences of international migration for sending and receiving countries, in terms of economic, social, cultural, and political impacts.

Research Questions

1. What are the primary reasons that people migrate internationally, and how do these factors vary across different regions and cultures?

2. What role do demographic factors such as age, gender, and family status play in international migration, and how do these factors interact with other drivers and constraints?
3. How are theories impactful on international migration policies, both at the national and international level, and how do they shape and influence migration patterns?
4. What are the consequences of international migration for sending and receiving countries, in terms of economic, social, cultural, and political impacts?

Research Methodology

This work was written using a doctrinal research method. The sources are mostly secondary, such as electronic documents and judicial precedents from reputable sources blended with the knowledge of the researcher as a student of sociology. The information used is qualitative and comes in the form of well-known theory and critique. The study's limitations are those aspects of the design or methodology that impacted or influenced the application or interpretation of the researcher's findings. The scope of this work has been limited to a certain extent due to the paucity of time to perform a qualitative analysis.

Identified Causes of International Migrations

Migration refers to the relocation of individuals from one place to another, which typically involves a permanent change in residence. The reasons behind migration include both macro-level factors such as regional disparities, as well as micro-level factors such as limited employment opportunities leading to a lower standard of living. Population change can be broken down into three components: mortality, fertility, and migration. Two main types of migration include internal migration, which refers to movement within a given country, and international migration, which involves the movement of people from one country to another for the purpose of employment, establishing residence, or improving living standards.³

People move for various reasons that can be grouped into five categories: economic, demographic, socio-cultural, political, and miscellaneous factors.

³ Kyaing Kyaing Thet, "Pull and Push Factors of Migration: A Case Study in the Urban Area of Monywa Township, Myanmar", available at <https://www.worldofstatistics.org/files/2014/03/Pull-and-Push-Factors-of-Migration-Thet.pdf> (Visited April 3, 2023).

1. *Economic Factors*: Among the categories mentioned above, economic factors are considered the primary motivator for migration, as many studies have shown. Low agricultural income, agricultural unemployment, and underemployment in developing countries are among the push factors that drive migrants towards areas with better job opportunities in developed countries. As such, most migrants move in search of better economic opportunities. The economic factors that motivate migration can be further classified into "push factors" and "pull factors."⁴

Push factors are the conditions that, for a variety of reasons, force a person to leave one place and relocate to another. Low productivity, unemployment, underdevelopment, unfavourable economic circumstances, a lack of opportunity for progress, the depletion of natural resources, and natural disasters are a few typical push factors. Rural regions need fewer workers thanks to the use of capital-intensive production techniques in the agriculture industry and the mechanisation of some tasks. Another significant reason for migration is the lack of alternate sources of income in rural regions. On the other side, pull factors are things that draw people to a specific location. Better facilities, greater pay, more favourable working circumstances, and more appealing amenities are a few of these.⁵

2. *Socio-cultural Factors*: Additionally, social and cultural variables are significant in the migration process. Migration can occasionally be a result of family disputes and the desire for independence, especially among younger generations. The impact of television, effective network communication, the cinema, urban-focused education, and the resulting shifts in attitudes and values are all factors that encourage migration.⁶
3. *Political Factors*: Political issues might occasionally promote or discourage migration from one region to another. Due to safety in Myanmar, the majority of rural residents moved to metropolitan regions after 1948. As a result, the political backdrop, opinions, and personal perspectives of the people affect migration.⁷

Also, the recent migrations after Myanmar military coup

⁴ Kainth, G.S., "Push and Pull Factors of Migration: A Case of Brick Kiln Industry of Punjab State", ASIA-PACIFIC JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, 2009, pp. 82-116.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ H. Crow, "Factors Influencing Rural Migration Decisions in Scotland: An Analysis of the Evidence", SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH, 2010.

⁷ *Ibid.*

4. *Miscellaneous Factors*: The desire to pursue an education that is only offered in metropolitan regions, as well as the presence of family and friends in urban areas, are other reasons that contribute to migration. Migration is also linked to close cultural ties, cultural variety, high vitality, and individual views.⁸

Role of Demographic Factors in International Migrations

The modern work hierarchy has issues with motivation and structural inflation, which are further complicated by the dualism of market economies. This results in a constant need for workers who are willing to endure harsh working conditions, low pay, little job security, and limited opportunities for advancement. In the past, this demand was filled in part by two groups who had social status and characteristics that made them well-suited for these types of jobs: women and teenagers.⁹

In the past, women worked up to the birth of their first child and perhaps even after the children had grown up. Their major social identity was that of a sister, wife, or mother, and they tried to make additional money for themselves or their families even though they weren't the main providers. They accepted poor pay and unstable employment because they considered their positions to be supplemental and transitory, and because they did not threaten their primary social standing, which was centred on their family responsibilities.¹⁰

Similarly, “historically, teenagers have often entered and left the labour force frequently in order to earn additional income, gain experience, and experiment with different types of jobs. They do not see dead-end jobs as a concern because they anticipate acquiring better jobs in the future, either after completing their education, gaining experience, or settling into a stable lifestyle. Furthermore, teenagers derive their social identities from their parents and family backgrounds, not from their employment. They see their work primarily as a means to obtain spending money, and the money and material possessions they acquire through their jobs improve their standing among their peers. The job itself is simply a means to an end.”¹¹

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Douglas S. Masse et al., “Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal”, *POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1993, pp. 431-466, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2938462?origin=JSTOR-pdf> (Visited April 3, 2023).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

For instance, during the last twenty years, Europe experienced several important events such as the enlargement of the European Union, the financial crisis, the refugee crisis, and Brexit. These events have had significant impacts on the economy and society of Europe. Firstly, there were changes in investment strategies, with a greater amount of capital exported from developed countries and the development of manufacturing industries in previously underdeveloped areas. Secondly, the microelectronics revolution led to a decrease in manual labour required in industry. Thirdly, the service sector expanded, with a higher demand for jobs requiring both high and low qualifications. Fourthly, the informal sectors of developed economies grew. Fifthly, there was a rise in labour flexibility, with an increase in part-time work and employment instability. Lastly, the labour force became increasingly differentiated along lines of gender, age, and ethnicity.¹²

Differential migration refers to certain individuals or groups that are more likely to migrate than others due to various factors such as age, gender, and social status. So, although demographers have attempted to establish universal patterns in migration differentials, only a few have consistently appeared in research conducted in different countries and periods. These include the fact that young adults aged 20-34 are more likely to migrate than other age groups, selectivity is at a minimum when the "push" factor is strong (such as famine or drought), and that areas with economic growth and technological advancement tend to attract better-educated individuals while areas that stagnate tend to lose their skilled workers first.¹³

Theories of International Migration Policies and Impact on Migration Patterns

The way a country manages immigration significantly influences the migration trends, which in turn profoundly affect the state's population, culture, economy, and politics. Many studies have been conducted to examine the immigration policies of individual nations. However, the theory of immigration policy is not clearly defined, and there is a lack of discussion among different schools of thought on the matter. The phenomenon of immigration significantly affects a state's population,

¹² Corrado Bonifazi, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN EUROPE, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46mv64.9> (Visited April 3, 2023).

¹³ Dr. Anwar-ul-Haq And Saif-ur-Rehman, "Socio-Economic and Psychological Factors in Rural-Urban Migration: A Case Study in Migration Selectivity", PAKISTAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REVIEW, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1975, pp. 12-27, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25824826> (Visited April 3, 2023).

culture, economy, and politics. Additionally, immigration has become a key factor in maintaining or increasing population levels in numerous Western nations. The management of immigration is essential in shaping patterns of immigration, as there are numerous individuals who wish to migrate to developed countries for various reasons, but there are limited chances to do so. Therefore, immigration policies primarily determine the extent of global migration.¹⁴

- *Neoclassical economics: Macro theory* — As per this theory and its extensions, international migration occurs due to geographical variations in the supply and demand of labour, just like internal migration. Countries with a surplus of labour compared to capital experience low equilibrium wages, while those with a shortage of labour experience high market wages, which is visually represented through the intersection of labour supply and demand curves. As represented in reports, “this wage differential prompts workers from low-wage countries to migrate to high-wage countries, leading to a decrease in labour supply and an increase in wages in the capital-poor country. On the other hand, the capital-rich country experiences an increase in labour supply and a decrease in wages, resulting in an international wage differential that only considers the costs of international movement, including pecuniary and psychological factors.”¹⁵
- *Neoclassical economics: Micro theory* — This theory suggests that people make the decision to migrate based on a cost-benefit analysis that leads them to believe they will receive a positive financial gain from moving. The concept of international migration is seen as an investment in an individual's skills and abilities. People move to places where they can be the most productive based on their abilities, but they have to invest in certain things before they can earn higher wages, such as travel costs, the costs of living while looking for work, learning a new language and culture, adapting to a new labour market, and the emotional toll of leaving old relationships and creating new ones.¹⁶
- *World Systems Theory* — World systems theory proposes that migration is an inevitable consequence of the upheavals and disturbances that occur during the course of capitalist development. The theory suggests that as capitalism spreads outward from its core regions, more and more of the world's population becomes integrated into the global market economy.

¹⁴ Eytan Meyers, “Theories of International Immigration Policy-A Comparative Analysis”, THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW, Vol. 34, No. 4, 2000, pp. 1245-1282, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2675981> (Visited April 3, 2023).

¹⁵ *Supra*, note 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

As a result, migration is generated from peripheral regions where land, raw materials, and labour are influenced and controlled by markets, and some of these migration flows move beyond national borders.¹⁷

- *Migration Systems Theory* — “World systems theory, network theory, institutional theory, and the theory of cumulative causation all propose that migration patterns develop a degree of stability and organization over time and space, leading to the identification of consistent international migration systems. Such systems are characterized by relatively high levels of exchange of people, capital, and goods between specific countries and less intense exchanges with others. Typically, an international migration system includes a central receiving region, which can be a country or a group of countries, along with a set of specific sending countries that are linked to it by unusually significant immigration flows.”¹⁸

In conclusion, the causes and effects of both internal and external migration are complex and diverse, with varying theories and models attempting to explain them. Despite this, there is no single, comprehensive theory of international migration, with different theories often separated by disciplinary boundaries. The major fields involved in migration research include demography, sociology, economics, geography, and political science. “The primary distinction is between theories explaining the initiation and consequences of international migration, which are often referred to as ‘classical migration research’ in the literature, and those explaining the continuation of migration. However, each theoretical framework offers unique insights into the migration process.”¹⁹

International Migrations and Their Consequences

Recently, migration has been a topic of significant political discussion. Although many people have positive attitudes towards immigrants, there are also misunderstandings and worries. Some individuals believe that migrants put a strain on economies. However, the pandemic has resulted in a sudden halt to migration. While the effects of the Great Lockdown are temporary, the pandemic may create a broader feeling of reluctance and scepticism towards openness, leading to long-term consequences on countries' willingness to accept immigrants. Reduced migration and high unemployment in destination countries could adversely affect the countries of origin, especially those

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

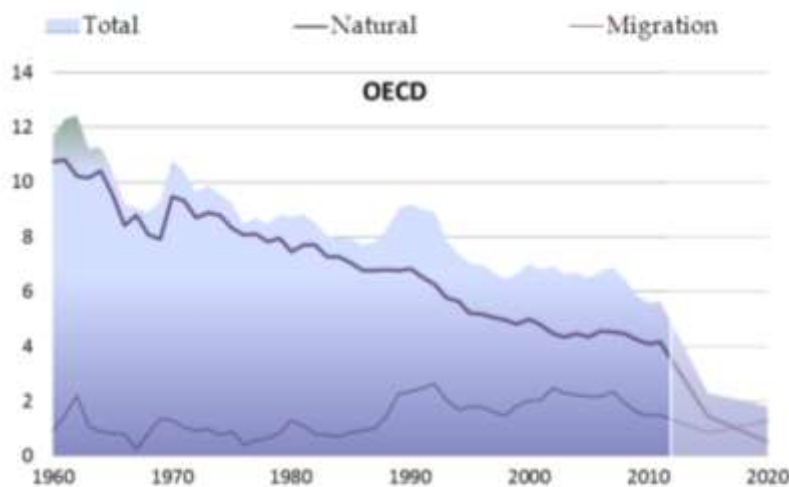
¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ “A Brief Overview of Theories of International Migration”, available at http://www.glopp.ch/C1/en/multimedia/C1_pdf1.pdf (Visited April 3, 2023).

that heavily depend on remittances from migrant workers sent back home.²⁰

In 2019, around 270 million people worldwide were migrants, meaning they were not living in the country where they were born. Since 1990, this number has climbed by 120 million. Despite this rise, the percentage of migrants in the world's population has stayed constant over the past 60 years at about 3%. It's interesting to note that while the percentage of immigrants in emerging market and developing nations has stayed around 2%, it has increased from 7% to 12% in advanced ones. However, a sizable portion of international migration includes long-distance travel, notably from emerging market and developing nations to established economies. Migrants frequently remain in their local area.²¹

Components of total population growth in OECD countries, 1960-2020, per thousand inhabitants



The impact of international migration on economic growth can be both direct and indirect. When migration increases the workforce, it is expected to result in growth in the GDP. However, the impact on per capita GDP growth is less clear. Migration has a demographic impact on receiving countries, not only by increasing the population size but also by changing the age distribution. Migrants are typically concentrated in the younger and economically active age groups compared to the native population, which leads to a reduction in dependency ratios.²²

²⁰ Philipp Engler et al., "Migration to Advanced Economies Can Raise Growth", <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2020/06/19/blog-weo-chapter4-migration-to-advanced-economies-can-raise-growth> (Visited April 3, 2023).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² "Is migration good for the economy?", available at <https://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf> (Visited April 3, 2023).

Additionally, migrants bring with them their own set of skills and abilities, which can add to the human capital of the host country. Studies conducted in the United States demonstrate that skilled immigrants play a significant role in stimulating research, innovation, and technological advancements.²³

The widely held belief that immigrants have a significantly negative impact on the wages and employment opportunities of native-born citizens is not supported by the available literature. Economic theory is unclear, and various empirical studies conducted in different settings have shown that the effect of immigration on the labour market outcomes of native workers is minor. There is no evidence of substantial reductions in native employment as a result of immigration. According to the majority of studies conducted on the United States and other nations, native earnings are only reduced by 1% for every 10% rise in the population's share of immigrants. Increased immigration has not been proven to materially harm native employees, even those who are most comparable to immigrant labour. Although the upper limit on the wage impact of immigration is large enough to explain a quarter of the increase in inequality in the United States in the 1980s, the actual effect is likely much smaller.²⁴

It is evident that immigration can be advantageous for migrants, as long as their rights are safeguarded. It can also have economic benefits for both the countries of origin and the host countries. However, in the current economic and trading systems, the more affluent and influential countries tend to benefit the most. Migration can also create social and cultural challenges that require attention while planning future services. While migration can bring people together culturally, it can also lead to conflicts if negative stereotypes held by locals are not addressed. It is crucial to provide accurate information about the local way of life to newcomers and ensure opportunities for integration. Given the right economic circumstances, migration is unavoidable, and efforts to stop it may lead to it happening in an undocumented manner.²⁵

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Rachel M. Friedberg and Jennifer Hunt, "The Impact of Immigrants on Host Country Wages, Employment and Growth", available at <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/abs/10.1257/jep.9.2.23> (Visited April 3, 2023).

²⁵ "The Pros And Cons Of Migration", available at <https://www.embraceni.org/migration/the-pros-and-cons-of-migration/> (Visited April 3, 2023).

Conclusion

Migration is a worldwide occurrence that is triggered not only by economic factors, but also by social, political, cultural, environmental, health, education, and transportation factors. It often occurs because people are pushed away from areas with fewer opportunities in terms of their socio-economic conditions, while at the same time being pulled towards more developed areas with better prospects.²⁶ Data on number of migrations have traditionally been scarce. The researcher therefore feels that flexibility in gathering information should be one key objective of the policy makers, given the rapidly changing context in which migration occurs. Although there is a lot of information about how migration is changing, conceptual progress is still needed to understand those changes and make them quantifiable. Scholars frequently lament the propensity to examine migration from the outdated viewpoint popular throughout the first half of this century, yet they find themselves continually drawn in by its alluring simplicity. It is extremely difficult to separate the few whose movement is considered significant according to mainly unexplained criteria from the vast majority of people who cross international boundaries.²⁷

Quantification appears to be necessary given the notion that people's temporary presence in some nations is having significant socioeconomic consequences. Yet, it has been difficult to create statistical methods that can both identify temporariness and the connection between repeated movements. The difficulty is in adjusting to the era of communication, in which migration is yet another connection that is bringing the world closer together.²⁸

This research paper has examined the multifaceted nature of international migration. By achieving the stated research objectives, the study has contributed to a better understanding of the primary drivers of international migration, demographic factors that influence migration patterns, the role of policies in shaping migration patterns, and the impact of migration on sending and receiving countries. The findings of this research indicate that international migration is a complex and dynamic process, influenced by a range of factors such as economic, social, political, environmental, and cultural conditions. The demographic characteristics of migrants, such as age, gender, and family

²⁶ *Supra*, note 19.

²⁷ Hania Zlotnick, "Measuring International Migration: Theory and Practice", THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1987, pp. v-xii, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2546497> (Visited April 3, 2023).

²⁸ *Ibid*.

status, also play a critical role in shaping migration patterns and experiences. Furthermore, the research has revealed the importance of international migration policies in determining the magnitude and direction of migration flows. Migration policies at both national and international levels can have significant consequences for the migrants themselves and the sending and receiving countries. Lastly, this study has highlighted the varied impacts of international migration on economic, social, cultural, and political aspects of sending and receiving countries. While international migration can contribute positively to economic growth and cultural diversity, it can also result in social and political tensions, leading to challenges such as xenophobia and discrimination.

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