Explaining Why People Move: Intra and Interdisciplinary Debates about the Causes of International Migration

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Introduction

The world has been undergoing the process of widening, deepening, and speeding up or, in other words, becoming globalized (Held et al. 1999). In 1885 Ravenstein presented his celebrated paper on the laws of migration before the Royal Statistical Society describing this process. Some consider this era of globalization as "the age of migration" – an age of unprecedented and exploding migration (Castles and Miller 1998). While some criticize theories of globalization connected to migration as a myth (Haas 2005), international migration is widening, deepening, and speeding up as described within a set of theories that have been developed by different disciplines of science. There are sociological, economic, socioeconomic, geographical, and integrative (cross-disciplinary) explanations on the causes of international migration (Bijak 2006). Theories on the causes of international migration can also be categorized as macro or micro. Macro theories cover segmented labor market theory; world systems theory; and the political economy model. Micro theories include neoclassical economic theory; human capital theory; new economics of migration; migration network; and the cumulative causation model (Morawska 2007).

The fact that international migrants also do not constitute a single, homogeneous unit of analysis has stimulated further variation in the literature. Temporary labor migrants, highly skilled and business migrants, irregular migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, forced migrants, family reunification migrants, and return migrants are all part of the contemporary processes of international migration (Castles 2000). The literature applies different typologies to these different categories of international migrants. The most common typology is to categorize them dichotomously between *voluntary* and *involuntary* migrants. While the former usually refers to the economic migrants who are believed to be endowed with an element of free choice, the latter describes politically induced refugees, exiles, and asylum seekers. Realizing that freedom of choice has many gradations and that distinctions between political and economic causes of migration are usually blurred, Richmond (1993) replaces this dichotomy with a continuum drawn between *proactive* and *reactive* migration within a systems model that identifies predisposing factors, structural constraints, precipitating events, enabling circumstances, and system feedback. In this way interstitial relations formerly lost with reductive analyses can be uncovered.

All these typologies are related to the categories of initiation of international migration that also move across time and space (Massey et al. 1993). Thus, there is also a need to examine theories explicating perpetual migration. Accordingly, the intra- and interdisciplinary debates about the causes of international migration are analyzed within two levels: (1) types of international migration; and (2) theories of different disciplines of science. Emphasis on different levels of analysis can be read within each discipline. The classifications made here are ideal categories as the distinctions between

them are usually blurred with a lot of overlaps. Thus, the outline presented here should be treated only as a tool to ease the analysis of a literature that incorporates different perspectives, levels, and assumptions upon a highly complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Accordingly, the next four sections will present the sociological, economic, geographical, and socioeconomic theories of proactive migration, foregrounding causes behind the international movement of labor. The fifth section will give a brief analysis on the determinants of the reactive migration of forced migrants and the sixth will outline the theories that explain the factors of perpetual migration. The final section will explore the efforts of those unifying approaches to build a single theory of international migration.

Sociological Theories of Proactive Migration: Intervening Opportunities, and Push–Pull Model

The sociological theories of migration go back to the concept of intervening opportunities put forward by Stouffer (1940; 1960; see also Bijak 2006). The theory assumes that there is no necessary relationship between mobility and distance. As an alternative, it presents the concept of intervening opportunities, suggesting that the number of migratory movements to a destination is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at that distance and inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities. In other words, the number of persons going a given distance is directly proportional to the percentage increase in opportunities at that distance (Stouffer 1940).

Elaborating on Stouffer's concept, Lee (1966) divided the causes of migration into four categories: factors associated with the area of origin, factors associated with the area of destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors. According to Lee, migration is determined by the presence of attracting *pull* factors at destination, and repelling *push* factors at origin. Lee's *push–pull factors* terminology is maybe the most cited concept in the migration literature. While demographic growth, low living standards, lack of economic opportunities, and political repression are usually cited *push* factors in the place of origin, demand for labor, availability of land, good economic opportunities, and political freedoms that attract migrants to certain receiving countries are common examples of *pull* factors (Castles and Miller 1998).

Much of the research dealing with the question of *why* people migrate emphasizes the *push–pull factors* behind international migration. In an interesting study, an international group of researchers investigated structural characteristics that *push* potential migrants from Morocco, Turkey, Egypt, Ghana, and Senegal and the variables that *pull* potential migrants towards the countries of destination from these areas (see Schoorl et al. 2000). Based on their findings, individual specific expectations and lack of economic growth prospects in the country of origin were the prime driving forces behind emigration intentions (Schoorl et al. 2000).

Economic Theories of Proactive Migration: Classical, Neoclassical Macro/Micro, Dual Labor Market, and New Economics of Labor Migration

Unlike sociological theories that take migration almost as an intact unit of analysis, economic theories of migration generally focus on international labor migration. Starting with Lewis (1954), these theories propose differences in salaries and the employment market within countries as factors of international migration. Their main assumption is that in countries with large supplies of labor in proportion to capital, there is a low equilibrium market wage, and in countries with a limited supply of labor

in comparison to capital, there is a high market wage. Thus, geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labor are the main cause of international migration where these cause labor to move from low to high wage countries. The result is supposed to be an optimal equilibrium where supply of labor increases and wages fall in the capital-rich country, and supply of labor decreases and wages rise in the capital-poor country.

In a similar vein, Harris and Todaro (1970) argue that migration is a result not of wage differentials, but rather of expected income differentials between the origin and destination. This model of neoclassical economic theory looks at the causes of international migration on a macro level, specifically focusing on the structural conditions of the labor market, without an emphasis on the micro level of individual decision making. On the other hand, the *neoclassical microeconomic theory* corresponds to the macroeconomic model on an individual level (Massey et al. 1993). Accordingly, migration is a result of the decision of the migrant to seek income maximization where individual rational actors decide to migrate because a cost-benefit analysis leads them to expect a positive net return from movement.

There are three main problems with neoclassical theories of migration (see Massey et al. 1993 for others): *first*, if the assumptions of these theories were true, it would be expected that international migration of labor will stop as soon as markets in the home and destination countries reach certain equilibrium. This has definitely not been the case in reality. *Second*, neoclassical theories only take labor markets into consideration to explain international movement of people. However, in reality, even the housing market is an effective determinant in influencing a migration decision. *Finally*, if the assumptions of the neoclassical theories were true, governments could manage migration only by controlling the demand and supply in their labor market. In reality, there are myriad mechanisms beyond the limit of governments in affecting international migration.

Focusing on forces operating at much higher levels of aggregation than neoclassical theories, *dual labor market theory* links immigration to the structural requirements of modern industrial economies. Advocated first by Piore (1979), the main theoretical assumption here is that there is a permanent demand for immigrant labor in the receiving countries that is inherent to the economic structure of developed nations. This is a result of four fundamental characteristics of advanced industrial socio-economic structures: structural inflation, motivational problems, economic dualism, and the demography of labor supply. This theory explains international migration in terms of the pull factors in the receiving countries and not by the push factors in the origin countries.

In a more recent article, Straubhaar (1986) also argues that international migration flows are determined by the demand in the receiving countries because of the existence of restrictive immigration control systems. Looking at the empirical results for the causes of migration flows from Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Turkey, Straubhaar concludes that the demand for immigrants in the destination country is the decisive condition for the phenomenon of international labor migration and the supply of migration-willing workers is only a necessary condition. Although such demand-based explanations are noteworthy, the existence of restrictive immigration control systems are proven to be ineffective and international migration is taking place at a level that is far beyond the limits of the restrictive policies of the nation-states. Irregular international migration, also known as clandestine or illegal migration, often resulting from human smuggling, proves to be a real challenge to such restrictive policies.

In the 1980s *new economics of labor migration* (NELM) emerged partly as a reaction to the neoclassical economic theories that explained the functioning of the markets in a very ideal way (Castles and Miller 1998). In imperfect market environments, migration could not be explained just by the conditions in the labor market. Other

factors such as insurance, capital, and credit markets are also important elements in the decision to migrate (Stark and Bloom 1985). Moreover, migration is not a decision of an individual, but of families or households that are seeking to minimize risks to family income or to overcome capital constraints on family production activities resulting from a variety of market failures. In line with the assumptions of the NELM approach, the results of a recent study that examines the determinants of a decision to migrate lends credence to the significance of economic incentives on the intra-household migration decision-making process where factors like migration, experience, household size, education, social capital, ethnic networks, off-farm activities, and irrigation also explain migration decisions (Tsegai 2007). NELM solves many of the problems associated with the neoclassical theories of international migration, but its assumptions also give more credit to the governments than they have in reality in relation to their ability to control international migratory flows through policies that influence labor, insurance, capital, and/or futures markets. In reality, the recipe for controlling international migration is not so simple as there are many other informal factors and illegal activities at work.

Geographical Theories of Proactive Migration: Distance and Spatial Movements

The geographical theories of migration concentrate on the role of distance in explaining spatial movements. These include population flows, i.e., migration. Accordingly, a factor that moderates the *spatial interactions* between regions is distance (Bijak 2006). The *gravity theory* of migration is an illustration of such a geographical understanding. Corresponding to Newton's law of gravity, this theory of migration assumes that migration between different regions is proportional to the product of population sizes in the origin and destination regions, which are similar to masses in the Newtonian model, and inversely proportional to the power of distance between the two regions, which is a discounting factor (Isard 1960 as cited in Bijak 2006). Empirically, the notions of mass and distance can be defined in many different ways: "Instead of population sizes, such economic measures as employment or income can be used as masses, while distance can be measured according to a different metric: either Euclidean (crow-fly), or taking into account the structure of the existing transport network, time, or cost of transportation," enabling consideration of various mass factors collectively (Isard 1960 in Bijak 2006).

The *gravity model* of Lowry (1966) related migration to unemployment rates, wage levels, and numbers of persons in the non-agriculture civilian labor force and in the armed forces, both at the origin and at the destination (Bijak 2006). Gravity is put forward by the discipline of geography and also used in many econometric models where income (GDP) differentials per capita are most commonly applied as masses, instead of population sizes (Alecke at al. 2001 as cited in Bijak 2006). Besides the gravity framework, more advanced mathematical tools were also used to find the patterns of spatial interactions. Wilson's concept of *entropy*, and *catastrophe and bifurcation theory* are such examples (see 1967; 1970; 1981; and Bijak 2006 for details).

Zelinsky's (1971) *mobility transition theory* is another geographic theory that explains changes in spatial mobility and designs a comprehensive framework describing human mobility (Bijak 2006). Human mobility occurs, changes, and diversifies as a result of social modernization. For example, in the transition from a pre-modern to a modern society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, migratory movements were primarily undertaken among the national borders and to other countries. In the industrialization period, this pattern changed to a migration flow from rural to urban areas. This process began to decline only in the advanced societies in the second half of the twentieth

century (Bijak 2006). In these advanced societies, Zelinsky argues, migration between and within urban areas as well as short-term circulatory movements (commuting, business trips, tourism, and mobility of other types due to the increasing role of communications) were on the rise. Thus, the *mobility transition theory* constructs a framework in which human mobility transforms as a result of social changes. The theory is important given its focus on the increasing role of communications in the current age of electronic communications technologies such as the internet (Bijak 2006).

A critique of geographical theories is that they more successfully explain internal migration (Öberg and Wils 1992), as they do not include such elements as institutional barriers (state borders, visa requirements, etc.) inherent in the case of international flows (Bijak 2006). However, this criticism might be rather irrelevant in the contemporary period of globalization and integration processes in Europe where the line between international and national borders is becoming fuzzy (Bijak 2006).

Socioeconomic Theories of Proactive Migration: World Systems Theory, Historical–Structural Approach

Socioeconomic theories of international migration are derived from a Marxist political economy emphasizing the unequal distribution of economic and political power in the global economy in a world where the rich are getting richer by exploiting the poor (Sassen 1988). *World systems theory* (after Wallerstein 1974) sees migration as a natural consequence of economic globalization and market penetration across national boundaries. This theory looks not only at the effects of the advances of the capitalist system in the economic core, but also at those within the periphery and the semi-periphery. Its chief assertion is that penetration of capitalism into peripheral, non-capitalist societies creates a mobile population that is inclined to migrate abroad (Massey et al. 1993; Castles and Miller 1998). As land, raw materials, and labor within the peripheral regions come under the influence of capitalist markets controlled by the core and facilitate the movement of goods, products, information, capital, and people, migration flows become inevitable (Massey et al. 1993). According to world systems theory, besides global political and economic structure, ideological, historical, and cultural links between receiving and origin countries are also determinants of international migration.

The intrinsic problem with world systems theory is that it gives far more credence to structural elements of globalization in shaping international migratory flows. Although it is true that structural conditions *are* important, as a decision of an individual, family, or household, migration is still about people, which involves some kind of an agency. The theory sees migration as a process rather than movements of humans who are active, empowered agents in their own life.

Reactive Migration: Politically and Environmentally Induced Forced Migrations

As stated earlier, international migration is not limited to labor migration. Refugees, asylum seekers, and exiles are also a part of the international migratory flows. In an effort to differentiate between the causes that lead these different groups to migrate, Öberg (1996) further bifurcated Lee's *push–pull factors* into *hard* and *soft* ones (Bijak 2006). The hard factors include dramatic situations that would create reactive migration, such as humanitarian crises, armed conflicts, and environmental catastrophes. The soft factors refer to less critical problems, like poverty, social exclusion, or unemployment. The dominance of particular factors in any migratory situation determines to some extent the characteristics of the migrating population.

The literature on forced migration is extensive, linking the issue to international security and human vulnerability (Newman and van Selm 2003), humanitarian intervention (Nachmias and Goldstein 2004; Martin et al. 2005), and to the so-called *root causes* that underline the social and international forces that generated refugees (Zolberg et al. 1989). The *root causes* argument put forward by Zolberg et al. (1989) underlines the grounds why violence that uprooted people in the first place has erupted. A familiar answer is unequal development and the global disparities between the south and the north. However, it is usually the level and type of violence that determine the likelihood and size of refugee displacement, and geographical proximity and preexisting ties are two main factors affecting the choice of destination (Castles and Miller 1998).

In an empirical study, Schmeidl (1997) develops a theoretical model of refugee migration that builds on existing research in early warning and preventive diplomacy and tests this model in order to evaluate the role played by generalized structural factors in the formation of forced migration. The author regresses the number of refugees on several political, economic, and intervening variables, using pooled time-series analysis over a period between 1971 and 1990 with the refugee data of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the US Committee for Refugees (USCR). The results of the analysis are: (1) measures of institutional human rights violations have weaker predictive power than do measures of generalized violence; (2) civil wars with foreign military interventions are more important in producing large refugee populations and prolonged migrations than are civil wars without outside influence; (3) ethnic rebellion is important as a cause of small refugee migrations but cannot significantly predict mass exodus; (4) economic and intervening variables have little impact on predicting refugee migration (Schmeidl 1997).

However, not all forced migrants are escaping from violence. Environmental hazards are also an important determinant of international forced migration. Both natural hazards (e.g., earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis) and technological environmental hazards (e.g., nuclear waste facilities, chemical spills) can cause people to move. The literature names those migrants forced out of places of origin due to such environmental disruption as environmental refugees (Jacobson 1988; Hunter 2005). The problem with this terminology is that the category of environmental refugee is not recognized in international political conventions. In a similar neglectful fashion, academic literature incorporates environmental considerations into migration theory in an elusive way (Hunter 2005). Attempting to examine the link between migration and environmental hazards, Hunter focuses on several of such theories. The first is Wolpert's "stress-threshold" model, which critically considers the "noxious environmental influences which are far-reaching in terms of the potential strain placed upon decision-makers" (1966:95). Wolpert argued that migration is a response to the stress experienced from the current residential location where environmental problems such as pollution, congestion and crime are the "stressors" that bring about "strain" which may lead to consideration of residential alternatives (Wolpert 1966; Hunter 2005). Elaborating on Wolpert's model, Speare (1974) came up with the concept of "threshold of dissatisfaction" after which individuals and/or households consider residential relocation. He argued that changes in household needs, in a particular location's social and physical amenities (disamenities), or in the standards used to evaluate these factors may determine this dissatisfaction (Hunter 2005). The relevance of Speare's framework for consideration of environmental hazards comes with physical amenities of locational characteristics.

Hunter focuses on the Value–Expectancy (V–E) model as a third theory that incorporates environmental considerations into the discussion of causes of migration. The V–E model defines migration motivation "as a function of the value placed on certain goals combined with the perceived likelihood that a chosen behavior will lead to those goals" where the goals can be defined as values and objectives such as comfort, wealth,

status, stimulation, autonomy, affiliation, morality (Hunter 2005:279). The environmental context of the V–E model lies beneath the general goal of comfort that includes a "more pleasant residential environment [and] a healthier or less stressful setting" (DeJong and Fawcett 1981:50, as cited in Hunter 2005:279). The final decision to move or stay is "shaped by the ways in which these values/goals interact with individual and household characteristics, societal and cultural norms, personal traits, and variation in opportunity structures between areas" (DeJong and Fawcett 1981:50, in Hunter 2005:279).

Perpetual Migration: Networks, Transnationalism, Institutions, and Cumulative Causation

Both the sociological, economic, and socioeconomic theories of proactive migration and the theories explaining reactive migration of politically and environmentally induced forced movements look at the conditions that initiate international migration. In reality, once it begins, international movement of people perpetuates across time and space, and the causes of these perpetual movements can be rather different from those that initiate them (Massey et al. 1993). Migration is a dynamic phenomenon. As it evolves, it creates new conditions that become both the means and the ends of new migrations.

Whether migration is an individual or household decision to maximize benefits or minimize risks, or a result of the structural inequalities of the markets or the global world, or environmental hazards, migration involves people, and people mean communication. Migrants have sets of interpersonal ties that connect them with former migrants, and non-migrants, both in the origin and in the destination areas, which naturally evolve through kinship, friendship, and/or shared community origin. According to the *social network theory*, these ties provide the migrants with the information that would decrease the costs and risks of movement and raise the expected net returns of migration for the migrants (Taylor 1986). Once a family member or a friend moves to a certain destination, he or she can provide important information on the place of destination, which can motivate the decision to migrate for the rest of the family members or friends left in the origin area. Such a network creates a social capital, a set of assets, that migrants can utilize to access employment or housing in the destination country, creating a new dynamic within migration and effects like chain migration.

Based on this framework, international migration has a large degree of inertia: once it begins, it becomes difficult for the authorities, i.e., the nation-states, to control, and it becomes independent from the factors that start it in the first place (Bijak 2006). Recently, the idea of networks put forward by social network theory has been generalized within the theory of *transnational social spaces* (Faist 2000; Bijak 2006). As defined by Faist (2000:199), "transnational social spaces consist of combinations of social and symbolic ties, their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that can be found in multiple states. These spaces denote dynamic processes, not static notions of ties and positions." The theory of transnational social spaces is laudable for several reasons. First, it recognizes the true nature of international migration that is a dynamic process consisting of a sequence of events across time and space, explaining the phenomena of chain migration, return migration, perpetuation of migratory processes, and the saturation of population flows at a certain level. Second, adding to the social network theories, it does not accept migrant networks as given, but addresses the questions of how migrant networks come into existence and how they navigate the circuitous movement of goods, ideas, information, and symbols. Finally, it provides a multilevel model, inserting a meso-level analytical framework in between the macro theories of structure and the micro theories of agency.

Another plausible theory that explains perpetual movements of international migration is the *institutional theory*. As acknowledged by many other theories that have been touched on here so far, migration is not only about the individual. The household, family, friends, markets, global economy, environment, and/or social networks are all elements of international migration. The *institutional theory* assumes that once international migration begins, other elements are added to this equation with the emergence of institutions and voluntary organizations that support the movement of migrants. International migration creates an industry of its own in which human smugglers, traffickers, labor contractors, real estate agents, and transportation providers operate through legal or illegal means, facilitating the movement of people. Such institutions usually operate beyond the limits of the nation state and many have proven difficult for governments to regulate (Tsegai 2007).

The final theory that examines the complex process of international migration is the *cumulative causation theory*. This theory claims that the social context in which subsequent migration decisions are taken is changed with every migratory flow, thus making new movements more likely (Massey et al. 1993; Tsegai 2007). In other words, causation becomes cumulative as the social context changes with every new migratory movement. According to Massey et al. (1993), the literature cites six socioeconomic factors that are affected by this cumulative tendency created by migration: the distribution of income; the distribution of land; the organization of agriculture; the culture of migration; the regional distribution of human capital; and the social meaning of work. To illustrate, "seeing that some families vastly improve their income through migration makes families in the lower income distribution feel relatively deprived, inducing some of them to migrate, which further exacerbates income inequality and increases the sense of relative deprivation among non-migrants, inducing still more families to migrate, and so on" (Massey et al. 1993:451–2).

By Way of Conclusion: Towards a Unifying Theory of International Migration?

In 1981, Gardner stated that "the study of migration decisions, while necessarily proceeding on the micro-level, must nevertheless take into account at all steps the influence of macro factors, the social and institutional, the economic and the geographic context within which the individual exists" (1981:88). The efforts to unify the theories of international migration have been continuing since then. One such effort is the *migration systems theory* (Kritz et al. 1992), which focuses on large structural conditions and macro-structural linkages between emigration and immigration countries. According to this theory, a migration system consists of two or more places (usually a core receiving region, which may be a country or a group of countries, and a set of specific sending countries linked to it) that are connected to each other by flows and counterflows of people and intense exchanges of goods as well as capital. The *migration systems theory* does not only claim the existence of linkages of people between regions but also trade and security alliances, colonial ties, flows of goods, services, information, as well as ideas that have usually existed even before migration flows began. Colonial ties between the United Kingdom and India, or France and Morocco, for example, facilitate the international migratory movements between these countries. The *migration systems theory* is a noteworthy example of the trend towards a multilevel and multidisciplinary approach, focusing on both macro- and micro-level factors, taking into consideration both individual- and household-level decision-making processes (Castles and Miller 1998). Moreover, it has been reasonably eminent in explaining the direction and the processes of international migration, not only as a onetime event, but rather as a dynamic process consisting of a sequence of events across time.

Resembling Zelinky's (1971) conceptualization, Massey (2002) has also embarked on an attempt to synthesize the theoretical frameworks of international migration provided by different disciplines within a new notion of *migration transition* that combines economic, political, sociological and psychological determinants of international migration. Like Zelinsky, Massey (2002) sees international migration in post-industrial countries as an outcome of socioeconomic development and integration processes. What differentiates Massey's view and makes it novel is the role that duration-of-stay plays and the effects of it that he describes. However, Bijak (2006) argues that in the current stage of development, the synthesizing effort of Massey to constitute an all-inclusive theory of migration is a moderate one without practical application.

Theories of international migration are clearly often elaborations of their precedents as this essay demonstrates. Similarly, keeping in mind that the research into international migration lacks a commonly accepted theoretical framework facilitating the accumulation of knowledge on the subject (Massey et al. 1993), Jennissen (2007) attempts to construct a new framework by building on the migration systems approach. Jennissen's *causality chains approach* incorporates causalities in the international migration systems within a theoretical framework wherein four groups of factors are distinguished: economic, social, political, and linkages. The causalities in this framework are derived from different international migration theories of neoclassical economic theory, dual labor market theory, the new economics of labor migration, relative deprivation theory, world systems theory, network theory, and institutional theory (Jennissen 2007:412). In an attempt to visualize the time dimension of an international migration system, Jennissen shows the various positions of these whole theories within the framework as causality chains (2007:412). This approach helps to indicate which factors are relevant for a certain migration flow (type) as well as to determine whether a particular migration flow is a temporal or ongoing phenomenon (2007:412).

Although it is not a direct effort to create an interdisciplinary, unifying theory of international migration, it is worthwhile to mention a recent study that explores the impossibility of understanding the phenomenon of international migration from a single perspective. Realizing that there are various theoretical approaches in the literature that have provided insights in the pattern of migration flows, Hooghe et al. (2008) conducted a study testing: (1) economic theory that considers migration to be a reaction to labor market and economic incentives; (2) cultural theories predicting that migration flows will occur according to a center–periphery pattern; (3) social network analysis assuming that migrants follow already established migration networks. Using OECD and Eurostat data on the migrant inflow into European countries between 1980 and 2004, they test these three approaches simultaneously. The results of the analysis demonstrate that migration flows react both to economic incentives (mainly in relation to the labor market) and to the cultural and colonial linkages without any indication that the latter's importance is declining over time.

Both Jennissen's and Hooghe et al.'s recent studies show that international migration is a complex phenomenon and cannot be explained through a single approach. Among the influencing factors are: wage differentials between countries; presence of other markets in the destination country, such as insurance, that can decrease the costs and risks of movement; colonial ties that in most cases enable the migrants to speak the language of the destination country; personal values; environmental changes caused by natural hazards or human made disasters; political persecution; civil wars; presence of family ties in the destination country. Thus, the literature on the causes of international migration is moving towards a unifying approach with new models that integrate factors of different theories provided by a variety of disciplines.

Looking at the literature presented here from an interdisciplinary perspective, it can be stated that each study explains the actual phenomena of international migration

only partially (Öberg and Wils 1992). While economic migration theories are solely interested in explaining the international movement of labor without an adequate explanation of migratory flows during system shocks (like the one that took place in post-socialist Europe at the end of the Cold War), other disciplines such as sociology, political science, geography, and demography largely ignore forced migration and migration policy factors by only considering migration on the macro level (Öberg and Wils 1992; Bijak 2006). Moreover, the theories put forward by these latter disciplines often do not differentiate even between internal and international migration. What they are interested in is the cause of movement, and whether this movement crosses international borders or not is usually not a concern. However, this might be an irrelevant concern in the contemporary world of globalization.

Looking at the literature presented here from a chronological perspective, it can be claimed that the end of the Cold War affected the migration literature. The end of the Cold War brought about changes in the refugee regime created by World War II, when Jewish refugees were resettled in Australia, Canada, and other refugee receiving countries where they made positive contributions to economic growth as well as to cultural and scientific advancement. Also, when the non-departure regime of the communist East made refugee numbers manageable with only a little increase after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the 1968 Prague Spring (Castles and Miller 1998), there was also an effect. The refugee problem became an international agenda item for policy makers as well as academics, resulting in an expansion of literature analyzing the people who were forced to move as a result of repressive regimes, civil wars, political persecution, etc., in their home countries.

Similarly, and more recently, environmental refugees are becoming a new international agenda item. Environmental hazards like tsunamis that are partly a result of global warming, as well as development-induced human-made disasters (it can also be argued that the former are also human made as global warming is a result of human exploitation of the environment), are causing more and more people to leave their place of origin for new destinations.

Clearly, the literature on international migration is *widening* with different disciplines of science providing different theories on its causes and expansion of its scope to different units of analysis. It is also *deepening* with the realization in the literature that international migration is a complex phenomenon with different elements and there is a need for unifying approaches. Finally, it is also *speeding up* with the emergence of new types of movements which are a result of rapid changes globally. The literature on the causes of international migration is expected to further expand and intensify in the future.

However, one might question the relevance of such an expansion and intensification in the literature in relation to its possible empirical implications. As stated earlier, none of the theories presented here is comprehensive and self-contained enough to explain a very complex phenomenon like migration. While a single, narrow theory cannot explain it, "wide-ranging theories, as for example, the mobility transition theory of Zelinsky (1971), the world systems theory of Wallerstein (1974), the migration systems theory of Kritz et al. (1992), as well as the unifying perspective of Massey (2002) are difficult to operationalize because they are not sufficiently formal in terms of the mathematical expressions applied" (Bijak 2006). There is a parallel tendency in the literature to forecast future migratory flows, but the theories have yet to prove their predictive power. Thus, forecasting migrations based directly on the laws or theories of human movement is not an option (Bijak 2006). While Bijak (2006) might be right in his criticism of inapplicability of the theories, as new models are developed and use the *push–pull factors* as their independent variables, they perhaps move toward a potentially predictive and empowering tool-set. Whether they have an empirical application or not, theory is where it all begins.

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International Migration Institute. At www.imi.ox.ac.uk, accessed June 2009. Aims to contribute to the development of new theoretical and methodological approaches to research and strengthen the global capacity for ongoing research in order to keep up with the continually changing processes and patterns of human mobility across the world.

IOM – International Organization for Migration. At www.iom.int, accessed June 2009. Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental partners. Provides data on global migration estimates and trends, regional and country migration figures, labor migration, and demographics.

Migration Information Source. At www.migrationinformation.org, accessed June 2009. A project of MPI (see below), it provides unique online resources, useful tools, vital data, and essential facts on the movement of people worldwide.

MPI – Migration Policy Institute. At www.migrationpolicy.org, accessed June 2009. Chronicles global migration movements, provides perspectives on current migration debates, and offers the tools and data from numerous global organizations and governments needed to understand migration.

UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency. At www.unhcr.org, accessed June 2009. UNHCR seeks to contribute to informed decision making and public debate by providing accurate, relevant and up-to-date statistics. Provides data, trends and statistical reports on the "People of concern to UNHCR": refugees, asylum-seekers, a refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons in more than 150 countries.

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