

Chapter II. Migration Theories

There are a few theories mentioned by Eduardo Sandoval about migration that we must mention for the comprehension of the whole phenomena. The Malthusian theory postulates that where there is more population with a relation to basic ways of production, as a result there is a pressure, which obligates to emigrate.¹ The theory supports that migration is necessary to adjust and make equilibrium of the population and optimises the use of work force that will favour the economic growth. In this sense, the displacement of the population generates occupational mobility that makes a stronger system. Another is the gravity model, which is used to explain migration based on distance and volume, but those are often dismissed as being merely empirical rather than explanatory.²

Other migration theory is the one call push-pull, this explains emigration in one sense because they were refused from the land with scarce resource and economic opportunities, and at the same time this same population is attractive for the receiving lands with better opportunities. This theory is used frequently by demographers who use quantitative variables such as age, sex, income, distance between the sending and the receiving home and others.³ For other authors such as Hollifield, this theory has old-fashioned arguments, “which rely heavily on neoclassical economic reasoning, miss this important point and so fail to explain the persistence of immigration in the face of restrictionist policies and anti-immigrant sentiments among Western public”⁴, in this way the theory limited us. The modernization theory, says that migration is the process of social mobility generated in the transition of the traditional society to a modern one. In concordance with this theory migration obeys personal decision.⁵

We find remarkable support in the theory of *development in a dual economy*, to our hypothesis. This theory was conceived by W.A. Lewis in 1954, and the main point is that they support the “growth with unlimited labour supply”, that model was the precursor to

¹ Eduardo Sandoval, *Migración e Identidad*. (México: Universidad Autónoma de Estado de México, 1993), 28-34.

² OECD, *The Future of Migration*. (Paris: OECD, 1987), 138.

³ Eduardo Sandoval, *Migración e Identidad*. (México: Universidad Autónoma de Estado de México, 1993), 28-34.

⁴ F. James Hollifield, *Immigrants, Markets, and States*. (USA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 169.

⁵ Eduardo Sandoval, *Migración e Identidad*. (México: Universidad Autónoma de Estado de México, 1993), 28-34.

models explaining migration, though not a *sui generis* migration theory.⁶ In this model labour migration plays a key role in the economic development process, and this is what many countries need to accept. The modern sector of develop country economies can only expand with the labour supply from the traditional agricultural sector (in this case from underdeveloped countries), in which productivity is limited. Labour migrates from the traditional sector to the better paid jobs created by the modern sector. As labour supply is unlimited, wages remain low in this sector, making it possible to sustain large-scale production and generate profits.

By exploiting the growth opportunities arising from demand in the modern sector, migration creates a leverage effect that benefits both the modern and traditional economic sectors, which receive and produce labour respectively.⁷ For the advanced sector, having at its disposal an unlimited supply of immigrants make it possible to expand the economy while keeping wage low and making the exploitation possible, thus securing a high rate of profit. For the traditional sector, out migration is the only way to get rid of surplus labour and to obtain some transfer of capital or skills by the remittances or migrants returns, and thus constitutes the precondition to embark in a process of development, out of economic backwardness. Therefore, in Lewis' model migration is a mechanism of development, exploiting the potential of growth in economic disparities, and where both sectors, traditional and modern, sending and receiving, greatly benefit from it.

The *neo-classical* theory, was a Lewis' theory deepened and adapted to migration by Ranis, Fei and Todaro among others. The theory says that

[a]t macroscopic level, migration results from the uneven geographical distribution of capital and labour. This reflects disparities in wages and standards of living, and migration is therefore generated by supply push and demand pull. Migrants will go where jobs, wages and other economic factors are most advantageous. The gradual disappearance of wage differences will eventually lead to the cessation of labour movements, and the disappearance of migration and the original disparities. The microscopic approach to the neo-classical theory postulated by Todaro and Borjas in the 1960s and 1970s examines the reasons prompting individuals to respond to structural disparities among countries by migrating. Migration therefore flows from an individual decision taken by rational players anxious to improve their standard of living by migrating to places that offer higher wages. It is a voluntary decision taken in full awareness of the facts after a comparative analysis of the costs and benefits of migration. Migrants will therefore choose the destination where expected net benefits will be the greatest.⁸

⁶ IOM, *World Migration 2003* (Switzerland: IOM, International Organization for Migration, 2003), 12.

⁷ *Ibid*, 12.

⁸ *Ibid*, 12-13.

Summarizing, migration results from the uneven geographical distribution of labour and capital. As a result workers tend to go from countries where labour is abundant and wage low to countries where labour is scarce and wage are high. The important thing is that in so doing, they contribute to the redistribution of the factors of production and to the equalization of wages between countries in the long run.

The Todaro model postulates that decision making of migrants is in response to rural-urban differences in expected rather than actual earning, as follows

[t]he basic premise is that the potential migrant chooses the location that maximizes expected gains from migration. The expected returns, measured by (1) the differences in real income between rural and urban job opportunities, and (2) the probability of new migrant's obtaining an urban job, are in puts to the potential migrant's "perceived value of migration."⁹

The important is that migration decision is based on differences in expected earning. In this way migration is the result of individual decisions made by rational actors who seek to improve their well-being by moving to places where the reward of their labour will be higher than at home, in a measure sufficient to compensate the costs involved in the move.

The *dual labour market* theory, was elaborated at the end of the 1970s by Piore among others, this theory links immigration to meeting the structural needs of modern industrial economies. It therefore places the emphasis on migration motives in the host countries; it is for that reason that it is interesting for our study.¹⁰ The theory basis in that

[t]he permanent demand for immigrant labour is the direct outcome of a number of features characterizing industrialized societies and underlying their segmented labour market. There are four operative factors. Advanced economies display a dichotomy favouring unstable employment through the coexistence of a capital-intensive primary sector and a labour-intensive secondary sector. These two sectors operate like watertight compartments and lead to the emergence of a dual labour market. The lack of upward mobility makes it difficult to motivate local workers and convince them to accept jobs in the secondary sector. The risk of inflation precludes any mechanism for wage increases, thereby stabilizing the system. Prompted by the opportunity to transfer funds to their countries of origin, immigrants from low-wage countries are inclined to accept jobs in the secondary sector because wages in that sector are still higher than in their home countries. Lastly, the structural demand of the secondary sector for unskilled labour can no longer be met by women and young people who had hitherto occupied these jobs. Women have now moved from occasional to permanent employment. Moreover, the declining birth rate has reduced the number of young people available for jobs at the bottom of the scale.¹¹

⁹ Jagdish Bhagwati and T. N. Srinivasan, *Lectures on International Trade*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984), 502.

¹⁰ IOM, *World Migration 2003* (Switzerland: IOM, International Organization for Migration, 2003), 13.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 13.

This theory explains in general rank the possible situation of some developed countries in the present or future, when birth rates have reduced the rate of employment in the second sector they need immigration to continue the production where labour intensive jobs are indispensable and the national workers reject the secondary sector jobs due to their low wages. In this way the local workers reluctance to occupy unattractive jobs cannot be resolved through standard market mechanisms, because raising salaries at the bottom require raising at the following echelons, and that would result in structural inflation. Foreign workers, can be a solution, because are willing to accept such jobs. It provides cogent explanations, which help to understand, the apparently anomalous coexistence of demand for foreign labour with significant rates of structural unemployment in a number of receiving countries. Another merit of this theory is its contribution to dispel the idea that immigrant workers necessarily compete with native ones and affect the latter level of wages and employment prospects.

II.I. International Relations Theories and Migration

Before developing my version of the 'liberal argument', I want to review international relations theories that inform our thinking about migration. In this way the study will show that the contradiction of the restriction of migration in the liberal theory does not remain in the others theories, so the paradox is a part of the liberal theory.

II.I.I. The Marxist Theory

The Marxist theory is based on the "dialectical materialist, in which the system of production determines the institutional and ideological structure of society."¹² For this Marxist perspective, the economics are first and the politic second, which will define the state's migration policies. Under this the classes plays the main role. For Marx capitalism is not seem as a retrogressive from feudalism, he show it as an advance in the sense that labour is free to sell its labour power to who they want and seek out the best possible pay. Capitalism, as a system of production, has a natural linkage with international migration because is a natural consequence of capitalist development, and their expanding markets

¹² Dougherty, James E. *Contending Theories of Intern ational Relation*. (USA: Lippincott Company, 1971), 174.

were needed to alleviate periodic crises of under consumption and excesses of savings over investment.¹³ Also,

[b]ecause classes cut across state borders class conflict is not confined to states; instead, it expands around the world in the wake of capitalism. Such expansion first took the form of imperialism and colonization, but it continues after the colonies have granted independence.¹⁴

So, in consequence, migration will continue across borders, as a class conflict that is not confined to states. The capitalist expansion and their market will always be unequal, thus the employers, with the implicit approval of the capitalist state, can use foreign workers, to their beneficial economical profit. It is the bourgeoisie class against the proletarian class. Also according to Hollifield, and based in this theory “migrants represent a surplus pool (an industrial reserve army) which help capitalist economies overcome periodic crises. This manpower is eminently exploitable. It can be mobilized in periods of rapid growth and disbanded in periods of slack demand”¹⁵ In this way they accept the utilitarian value of immigration under the theory.

II.I.II. *The Realist Theory*

We will base ourselves in the theoretical assumptions of realism of Dougherty, realist theory comes from realism that is a reaction to utopianism and his main support is that the governments must regulate international migration to protect national interest. In this theory, the state is made to defend national interest, thus there is no need for the existence of a consensus between the nations because each one is searching for their own interest. In this way, the state can act with an interest to assure an adequate supply of labour.¹⁶ For example, if surprisingly, there is a disproportionately large inflow of workers this could destabilize the wage and provoke deterioration in the standard of living of the citizen worker, the state must act to protect them. From this perspective, the nation-states are seen as the principal unit of analysis.¹⁷ States have to control trade and other kinds of international exchange, such as migration to protect national security and promote national

¹³ Ibid, 174-5. and Jackson, Robert and Gorg Sorensen. *Introduction to International Relation*. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1990), 177.

¹⁴ Ibid, 177.

¹⁵ F. James Hollifield, *Immigrants, Markets, and States*. (USA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 215.

¹⁶ Dougherty, James E. *Contending Theories of International Relation*. (USA: Lippincott Company, 1971), 65-66.

¹⁷ Ibid, 65-66.

interest. In this way the state creates its own morality and acts to assure its survival so the anti-immigration policies will be in function of those national interests. In this way
Dougherty

criticizes those realists who overemphasize the “national interest”, because at the national as well as the individual level “egotism is not the proper cure for an abstract and pretentious idealism.” Since each nation interprets justice from its own perspective rather than a competing state’s, it becomes difficult to give operational meaning to the rule that statesmen must always frame policies based upon “national interest.”¹⁸

But in the end, and under the realistic perspective, it is the policy makers who dictate migration restriction, as Morgenthau said, “think and act in terms of interest defined as power [and] protect their physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations”¹⁹ or in the case of migration by other nationals in their territories. They are coherent with his theory if they want to close their borders their justifications do not suffers any contradiction.

¹⁸ Ibid, 71.

¹⁹ Ibid, 76.