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## **INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: ITS VARIOUS MECHANISMS AND DIFFERENT THEORIES THAT TRY TO EXPLAIN IT**

The paper consists of two parts. The first reviews an appraisal of the contemporary theories of international migration. Among older theories, the push-and-pull model, the segmented labour market theory, world-system theory, and the political economy model are examined as macro-level explanatory approaches, and, at the micro-level, the neoclassical economic (otherwise known as rational choice) theory, human capital theory, new economics of migration, migration network or social capital theory, and the cumulative causation model are examined. The second part presents an encompassing theoretical approach, migration as structuration process, and identifies its advantages over other models. This approach is then comparatively applied to eight immigrant groups chosen as case studies.

Keywords: International Migration, Theory

### **Part 1**

Why do people, and more and more people, move long distances to unknown, and often hostile places? Why do they move in particular directions and not the other? What factors from their environment make them go or stay at home? How do they make these decisions? No less than nine theoretical models explaining the mechanisms triggering and sustaining international migration exist in this field of study. I outline them first and, next, present critical evaluations of these theories. We begin with the macro-level theories, locating the forces responsible for international population flows in large structures and long processes, and, then, examine micro-level models that explain this movement by local circumstance and the features and needs of individuals.

### *Macro-level theories of international migration*

We begin with theories that locate the triggering mechanisms of international migrations in the world's or regions' macro-level structures, that is, in the operation of the large economic and political systems. These theories include the so-called push-and-pull model, the segmented labour market theory, the world-system model, and the political economy approach.

Advocates of the *push-and-pull* approach view international population flows as generated by macro-level disequilibria between regions or countries in the supply of and demand for labour and the resulting wage differences these imbalances create. The "push" forces operate in the economically un(der)developed areas affected by insufficient supply of labour and low wages, sending people out in search of livelihoods. The "pull" forces operate in the economically developed areas where the labour demand and wages are higher, attracting migrants pushed out of their economically depressed regions or countries. The push-and-pull model assumes that international labour migration will, over time, equalize the forces of economic growth between regions/countries that display economic imbalances. After the departure of the sufficient numbers of labour migrants raise wages in the sending areas, and after wages are lowered in receiving areas as the result of migrants' joining the labour market, international migration between these regions/countries is expected to cease.

Although it also focuses exclusively on macro-economic mechanisms of transnational population flows and, thus, on labour migration, the *segmented labour market* theory differs from the push-and-pull model in two important aspects. First, it does not assume the relocation of people from less to more developed regions to balance out world economic disequilibria. And second, it views international labour migration as primarily demand- (or "pull") based, responding to the structural needs of contemporary highly developed economies in the world. These structural needs stem from the bifurcation of the economically advanced regions/countries into the capital-intensive *primary sectors* offering high-skill, well-paid jobs with good advancement opportunities, and labour-intensive *secondary sectors* with expendable, low-paid unskilled jobs.

This continued demand for unskilled and dispensable labour in secondary sectors of the economies of advanced regions/countries is satisfied by immigrants from un(der)developed parts of the world recruited by receiver firms. Although the receiver-country employers cannot improve the secondary-sector labourers' working conditions and raise their wages lest their firms become uncompetitive and be forced off the market, immigrant labourers, the segmented labour market theory holds, are willing to work under such poor circumstances because they view bottom-level jobs in

receiver countries solely as a means to earn income, which they assess by the standards of their home-country communities' wages and status.

The *world-system theory* of international migration has been the most recent addition to macro-level economic models of transnational population flows. This theory has little to do with wage or employment differentials between countries as posited by the push-and-pull model to generate cross-border population transfers, nor does it link the origins of international migration to the segmentation of labour markets in economically advanced regions or countries. Rather, it views these transnational relocations of people as generated by the structure of the global capitalist economy conceived as the interrelated whole composed of the unequal parts referred to by the already-introduced terms of core and periphery.

According to advocates of the world-system theory, the structural dislocations in the peripheral economies accompanying their incorporation into the expanding, core-dominated global capitalist economy, unavoidably generate large volumes of international population flows moving in the compass, SE-NW directions. Although they traverse compass-like worldwide, thusly mobilized international population flows, the world-system model holds, are particularly likely between past colonial powers and their former colonies because of the pre-existing connections in transportation and communication infrastructures, administrative links, and linguistic and cultural commonalities.

Basically concerned with labour migrants, the world-system model allows also for international relocations of political refugees, likewise moved by macro-economic interests played out well above their heads. As succinctly summarized by Douglas Massey et al. (1993:448), "political and military interventions by governments of capitalist countries to protect investments abroad and to support foreign governments sympathetic to the expansion of the global market, when they fail, produce refugee movements directed to particular core countries, constituting another form of international migration."

Last to consider in this group of theories is the political economy model of international migration. Unlike previously discussed approaches, and in part formulated in reaction against the exclusively economic concern of the existing macro-level theories, the political economy model explicitly focuses on the political mechanisms generating (or hindering) transnational population flows. This approach views receiver- country or region (for example, the European Union as a supranational body) immigration policies, including regulations of entry, duration of sojourn, permission to work, the treatment of unauthorized immigrants, and of citizenship as directly shaping the volume and directions of international migration.

Advocates of the political economy approach forcefully argue for the recognition of the importance of the realm of political decisions as a causal (and not only, as in the world-system model, resultant from economic circumstances) force in shaping international population flows. They seldom, however, make the specific claims as to the causal weight of the political factors – is it greater? similar? situationally variable? – in comparison with the economic forces. The exception has been the *hegemonic stability* model that views the global economic system as resting on the political and military power of a group of the dominant states.

The hegemonic receiver-states, according to this theory, employ the neoliberal economic order to regulate global trade and finance as well as international migration, especially through temporary low-skill labour importation programmes and residence laws inducing encouraging settlement of well-to-do foreign investors. For example, between 1942 and 1964 the United States imported almost 5 million of temporary agricultural workers from Mexico under the Bracero Programme designed specifically for this purpose, and, in diminished numbers, it continues to bring in such labourers under the special H-2A visa programme for temporary agricultural workers. At the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum, in 1992 a new “investor category” was created in the U.S. immigration system that guarantees permanent residence to 10,000 immigrants annually in exchange for a US \$ 1 million-worth investment by these newcomers that results in the creation of at least ten jobs in the United States.

#### *Micro-level theories of international migration*

The oldest in this group, *neoclassical economic* model consists of a macro-structural framework and, within in, the individual-level explanation of the mechanism of international migration. The macro-level context of transnational population movements in this approach resembles that of the push-and-pull model: it is the imbalance between different parts of the world in the supply of and demand for labour and the resulting wage differences.

At the micro-level, the neoclassical economic theory presumes the individuals living in low-wage regions make rational calculations of the economic costs and benefits of migrating. They then make the decisions regarding migration (or non-migration) by calculating the expected wages as returns to labour investment (and other costs related to relocation) over the expected length of stay at their destinations. Over time, (e)migrants’ actions, that is, transnational relocations in search of labour, based on rational cost/benefit calculations, equalize the forces of economic growth between regions/countries that display economic imbalances. After the departures of sufficient numbers of labour migrants raise wages in the sending areas, and

after wages are lowered in receiving areas as the result of migrants' joining the labour market, international migration between these regions/countries is expected to cease.

A more recent variant of microeconomic model, *human capital* theory, views the likelihood of international migration as dependent on such standard components of individual (human) capital as age, gender, education, skill, experience, marital status, experience, as well as on personality features such as ambition to succeed and “entrepreneurial spirit”, or a willingness to take risks by changing language, culture, and social environment.

The human capital theory holds international migration to be selective, drawing out people with certain socio-demographic and personal characteristics. The mobilizing context of their (e)migration going is the absence of income-earning and socioeconomic advancement opportunities at home. Because international migrants are positively selected with respect to their human capital, the theory holds, these transnational relocations create a “brain drain” from sending countries that cannot meet the income and career expectations of their highly educated elites. Thus, the developing countries face a paradox: as they grow and modernize with the assistance of well educated and highly skilled emissaries from the economically advanced countries, they produce more human capital of their own that they need for further development, but they lose it in the form of brain-drain emigration to these economically advanced countries because they cannot offer their highly skilled professionals comparable life chances at home.

Another, increasingly common path of brain-drain migration begins already abroad, at the universities in core regions of the world that train students from developing countries who never return home. For example, from among about 500,000 foreign students in the United States in the year 2000, nearly one-half, most of them from the developing world, did not intend to return home after completing their studies.

In contrast to neoclassical economic and human capital theories of international migration, the *new economics of migration* model focuses not on individuals, but on households or families as the decision-making units. These collectively made decisions to (e)migrate, in this approach, are responses to local income uncertainties and to irregularities in local markets (employment, capital, credit, insurance). Income-seeking migration of one or several family members is used as an element of the household's risk diversification strategy. Several considerations affect these decisions regarding (e)migration: the family's life-stage and the number and needs of underage children, age, health, and skills of individual family members, family plans (necessities and extras), and gendered employment requirements at home and opportunities abroad. Linking individual households with their local

environment, the new economics of migration theory assumes an additional consideration in the family decision-making process, namely, its existing and desired economic and status position in the local community.

Unlike the previously considered theories of international migration, the *social network* approach does concerns primarily the mechanisms that sustain rather than trigger off transnational population flows. Migration networks are understood in two ways. First and foremost they denote transnational interpersonal connections that link those at home with migrants who are in destination countries through ties of kinship, friendship, and mutual obligations stemming from the shared community of origin. In the second meaning, the term refers to formal or institutional (ethnic churches and associations, immigrant travel, credit, and counselling agencies ) networks of information and assistance that emerge in the already established immigrant communities abroad to serve the needs of its members, as well as their kin and acquaintances in places of origin who contemplate migration.

The network theory holds that the existence of social networks of information and assistance, otherwise called *social capital*, significantly increases the likelihood of continued international migration between places of origin and destination. As migrants' social capital, such networks lower the risks of travel and increases the expected returns to migration by providing access to employment and wages abroad and the opportunity of savings that can be remitted home together with the material advancement of immigrants themselves. To emphasize the autonomous effect of migration networks in sustaining cross-border movement and settlement in the destination place, the advocates of the network theory point out that whereas these international population flows are triggered by adverse macro-economic or political conditions, they usually continue even when the circumstances that activated them improve. They continues as long as the sustaining them translocal social support networks make it possible for those interested in moving to do it without difficulties. When social support networks cease to perform their facilitating functions, migration begins to decelerate.

Last to consider here, the *cumulative causation* model of migration is also concerned with the persistence of transnational population flows, yet it differs from the competing theories by identifying not one, but several factors shaping this movement. "Causation is cumulative," states one of the proponents of this approach, "because each act of migration alters the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made, typically in ways that make additional movement more likely" (Massey et al. 1993: 451).

The conditions thus affected by international migration, as identified by scholars who have applied this model in their empirical studies, include five elements. First is the distribution of income (the visibly improved income of outmigrants motivates stayers to follow in their footsteps). Second is the distribution of land (the more outmigration, the more people have access to the funds needed to purchase land). Third is the organization of agrarian production (the more outmigration, the greater the influx of capital into and, thus, the greater modernization (mechanization) of agriculture leading to the dislocation of agricultural labour and, in effect, to greater outmigration). Fourth is the culture of migration (as migration becomes commonplace in a particular locality, it becomes the accepted or even expected norm in a local culture, thus increasing the number of outmigrants). And fifth is the regional distribution of human capital (as educational and occupational training programmes proliferate in sending regions, incentives to leave increase among better educated, better skilled, and more ambitious people).

#### *Evaluation of Migration Theories*

The recent recognition by immigration scholars of the complexity of interrelated multi-level factors that shape international population flows has led to critical evaluations of the existing theories of migration. The main criticism shared by these assessments of different theories, macro- and micro-level, concerns their exclusive focus on single (or single family of) causal factors which, in view of the diversity of simultaneously operating factors renders the proposed explanations insufficient. Particular models have also attracted specific criticisms. I summarize below their main points.

The most common criticism of macro-level migration theories has been their “economic reductionism” that is, explaining international migration as mobilized (or impeded) solely by the economic mechanisms, be it wage disequilibrium between regions (push-and-pull approach), the demand for low-paid labour in the secondary sectors of highly developed economies (the segmented labour market theory), or global core-periphery mutual economic dependence (the world-system model). The other common weakness of these models, in the shared opinion of the critics, has been the exclusive focus on the macro-structural factors, without recognizing the impact of individuals and their local surroundings on the volume and directions of international migration.

The push-and-pull theory of migration has also been criticized specifically: first, for treating wage disparities by themselves, taken out of the broader context of the economic dynamics of the involved regions, as the sufficient explanation of international migration; and second, for the empirically disproven assumption that international migration leads to a balancing of

the forces of economic growth in different regions. The segmented labour market model has likewise attracted two specific criticisms. One points out the unjustified focus of this approach on the demand (“pull”) only side of the mechanisms of transnational population flows by demonstrating the importance of the supply (“push”) circumstances in co-determining this movement. The other invalidates the segmented labour market theory’s assumption that it is formal recruitment by receiver-country companies that leads most migrants to undertake their international by demonstrating empirically the operation of other channels of migration. Finally, most criticisms of the world-system model concern its overly global, detached from the reality on the ground and, thus, much too simplified explanatory approach to the international movement of people.

Although its “bringing the politics back” into theorizing about international migration has been appreciated by the critics, the political economy theory of migration has been reprobated, like its macro-economic competitor-models, for its single-factor explanation that does not account for the complexity of the examined phenomenon and the excessive causal weight accorded the macro-level political forces in shaping international migration flows at the cost of human actors and their local environment.

A genre of the political economy theory, the hegemonic stability model of migration has also been criticized, specifically, for its one-sided interpretation of receiver-state immigration policies as motivated exclusively by the economic self-interest. For example, although the immigration policies of the United States have clearly contained the “hegemonic” elements, the critics argue, they by no means exhaust them. The current American immigration policy was originally formulated in 1965 by the landmark Immigration Act and subsequently amended – to note only the major alterations – by the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, and the Immigration Act of 1990. It establishes regional (Western v. Eastern Hemisphere) and per-country numerical limits of immigrant visas (repeatedly adjusted over time, it now stands at 675,000 annually), granting priority to applicants who meet the criteria of preference: those with immediate family in the United States and with special or needed job skills (primarily high-level), and political refugees with legitimate claims for this status; a separate number (currently 55,000 annually) of permanent residence permits is also set for “diversity” immigrants through so-called lottery visa programme. The policy also allows for legalization of unauthorized immigrants already in the country who had lived there a specified number of years (so-called “Amnesty law”).

If macro-level, economic and political, models have been criticised for the negligence of human-actor and local factors shaping international population flows, negative evaluations of micro-level models stem from just

the opposite: an insufficient attention to the macro-structural contexts of migration. Another, already-noted criticism aimed at micro- and macro-level theories alike, concerns their (cumulative causation model excepted) single-factor explanatory schemes, which are seen as insufficient by present-day immigration scholars well aware of the diversity of the mechanisms of international migration.

In addition to the above, the rational choice model of transnational population movement has been specifically criticised for its inaccurate view of people as moved solely by rational calculation and profit maximization, and for its mistaken assumption that all potential migrants have equal and unlimited access to relevant information on the basis of which to make well-grounded decisions about the move (or non-move).

The explanatory framework proposed, in turn, by the human capital theory has drawn major criticism for the lack of acknowledgment of the culturally-specific and variable human capital values and, therefore, a basic unit of analysis that is hardly comparable across time and space. The only general prediction derived from the human capital model, its critics complain, is that human capital is somehow related to the likelihood of international migration, but the intensity and direction of this relationship remain unspecified.

The new economics of migration model, appreciated for its breaking with the “individual-in-the-social-vacuum” treatment of the migration issue, has been nevertheless challenged on neglecting to isolate the influence of sender locality market imperfections (the necessary context of pro-migration family decisions) from other potentially contributing factors such as expected employment and income in the destination.

Two limitations of the migration network theory have been pointed out in the literature. First, its fragmentary account of the international migration process, focusing only on its sustaining phase. Its second weakness, according to scholars who tried to apply this model in research, is that it has proven difficult to demonstrate empirically that migration networks of information and assistance are indeed the most powerful (as presumed in the model) predictors of transnational movement of people.

Finally, the cumulative causation theory, while recognized as a welcome progress beyond single-factor explanatory models, has attracted criticisms for its two limitations. First, it focuses exclusively on the conditions in agricultural societies (land distribution, organization of agricultural production) and lacks a theoretical elaboration of the impact of outmigration on the economies of urban regions that send out today large numbers of migrants. The second criticism, of a methodological nature, concerns the necessity to gather, difficult to obtain, systematic longitudinal data in order empirically to verify the theory’s claims.

### *New Explanatory Approaches to International Migration*

The recognition by international migration scholars of the multiplicity of mechanisms that simultaneously initiate and sustain transnational population flows has led them not only to critical evaluations of the existing theories of this phenomenon but also to attempts to formulate new, more complex explanatory approaches.

Such an initial reformulation was accomplished by Douglas Massey and colleagues in the by now classic volume *Worlds in Motion. Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millenium* (1998). Spanning five Continents, an empirical assessment of the validity of different theoretical models of international migrations flowing from underdeveloped South/East (SE) to highly developed North/West (NW) – the most comprehensive evaluation thus far in the subject literature – has led the authors of *Worlds in Motion* to the conclusion that these theories are neither inconsistent nor mutually exclusive and all of them “play some role in accounting for international migration in the contemporary world although different models predominate at different phases of the migration process” (ibid., 281)

Thus, the initiation of international migratory flows is best accounted for by a combination of propositions from the world system, segmented labour market, neoclassical economics, and the new economics of migration theories, and the nature and effectiveness of (e)immigration policies of sender and receiver states. At the global level, the socioeconomic and political transformations and, in particular, widespread dislocations of people that accompany the incorporation of non- or pre-market (SE) countries into the capitalist world economy, the concomitant penetration of world-capitalist culture into the incorporated regions, and rapid advances in global transportation and communication (world system theory), combined, at the state-national level, with a demand for immigrant workers in secondary sectors of (NW) postindustrial receiver economies (segmented labour market theory) and, reflecting this demand, immigration policies of receiver governments, set in a compass SE-NW motion large numbers of people in search of livelihoods in the core regions of the world. At the micro level, triggering factors of international migrations from less-to-more developed parts of the world include wage differentials between sending and receiving countries/regions (neoclassical economics) combined with the sending households’ calculated efforts to diversify the risks of accumulating capital by engaging in both local and international markets (new economics of migration).

A combination of specific propositions derived from the segmented labour market model and social capital and cumulative causation theories explains the perpetuation mechanisms of international migratory flows.

Transnational movement of people is sustained by the continued inducements to (im)migration generated, in sender communities, by increased income discrepancies resulting from earlier migrations and the ensuing relative deprivation of those at the bottom of the distribution, and, in receiver communities, by the formation of ethnic enclave economies that augments the demand for immigrant workers (segmented labour market theory). The growth and expansion of migrant networks of information and assistance stretching between sender and receiver communities perpetuate international migration (social capital theory). Over time this movement perpetuates itself in ways that make additional migration more likely – and the attempts of receiver states to control it ineffective – sustained by established transnational support networks, by increasing discrepancies in the distribution of income and material affluence in home-country communities, and by the “culture of migration” created during continued transnational travels (theory of cumulative causation).

Any theoretical synthesis of the existing accounts of SE-NW international migration, conclude Massey et al. their empirical assessment of the existing models, must contain four basic elements: a treatment of the structural forces that (1) are conducive to (e)migration from less-developed countries, and (2) attract immigrants into developed nations, (3) a consideration of motivations, purposes, and normative practices of the people who respond to these structural forces by becoming international migrants; and (4) a treatment of the social and economic structures that arise to connect areas of out- and in-migration.

The empirically grounded identification of the necessary components of an encompassing model of international migration, including macro- and micro-level structures and individual actions, is the most valuable contribution of the presented above “multiplex” approach to the mechanisms of transnational population. It does not attempt, however, to integrate the identified macro- and micro-level structural and human-actor factors shaping international migration into a theoretically coherent account of this process. This task is accomplished by the *structuration* model of international migration that incorporates the contributions of *Worlds in Motion*'s ground-laying work and improves on it by, first, elaborating theoretically the categories of social structure and human agency, and, second, accommodating in one theoretical framework the reciprocal influences of migrants' purposeful activities and home and host societal structures.

## Part 2

Based on the assumption that the society shapes individuals and, simultaneously, the individuals shape society in the ongoing process of mutual (re)constitution – the underlying idea of the structuration model – informs the analyses of the sociological issues related to immigration presented in this volume. After sketching out the basics of the structuration model, I apply this interpretative framework comparatively to account for the migration trajectories of the eight immigrant groups chosen as the case studies.

Thus, for the purposes of this and forthcoming analyses, the structuration process can be summarized as follows: Whereas the long-term and immediate configurations and pressures of forces at the upper structural layers set the “dynamic limits” of the possible and the impossible within which people act, it is at the level of the more proximate social surroundings that individuals and groups evaluate their situations, define purposes, and undertake actions the intended and, often, unintended consequences of which, in turn, affect these local-level and, over time, larger-scope structures.

Structures, conceived of as patterns of social (including economic and political) relations and cultural formations (re)constituted through everyday practice of social actors are plural in character (different-purpose organizations, strong and weak informal networks, [sub]cultures), scope (global, regional/national, local), dynamics (more or less stable), and durability (longer- to short-dure). Their multiplicity imbues structures at all levels with the inherent tensions or even direct contradictions that create “gaps” and “loopholes” in-between different structural arrangements and, resulting from these imperfections, an inconsistent and mutable capacity to enable and constrain human agency.

Human agency can be conceived of as the everyday “engagement by individuals of different structural environment which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing situations.” It comprises three analytically distinguishable components (in lived experience they closely interrelate). The *iterational* or habitual element, refers to “the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thoughts and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity”; the *projective* element encompasses “the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors’ hopes, fears, and desires for the future”; and the *practical-evaluative* element entails “the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgements among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the demands,

dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations.” Depending on a particular configuration of circumstances, “one or another of these three aspects might predominate” in guiding individuals’ actions (Emirbayer and Mische1998: 970-72).

As they adjust their accustomed reactions and future-oriented projects to their assessment of the practical situations of the moment, social actors create and recreate different structures of social life. This reproduction, however, is never ideal. Inherent in all humans is “the capacity to appropriate, reproduce, and, potentially, to innovate upon received cultural categories and conditions of action in accordance with their personal and collective ideals, interests, and commitments”; its concrete forms and “contents” are shaped by sets of particular cultural orientations and resources available in time- and place- specific environments in which people live and by specific configurations of iterational, projective, and practical-evaluative considerations. Agency arises from the actors’ knowledge of cultural rules and (some) control of resources, which means the ability to apply these tools to new situations. New situations, in particular, enable actors to reinterpret schemas and redesign resources. As a result, as social actors innovate and devise ways to cope with the world, “thoughts, perceptions, and actions [that are] inconsistent with the reproduction of existing social patterns” occur (*ibid.*, 1442-43).

Thus conceptualized, the structuration model is particularly useful for interpretations of the pursuits of (im)migrants who move into or between different environments and confront new circumstances. Interpreted in this framework, (im)migrants’ activities are neither simply the products of structures nor their agentic volitions but of the time- and place-specific contexts of the interactions between the two. How much agentic power individuals can derive from their socio-cultural resources is contingent on the influence of other macro- and microstructures that support particular orientations: dynamism or stagnation of the economy, an open or segmented labour market, the restrictiveness of sender and receiver state immigration policies and the “gaps” created by their imperfections, civic-political pluralism or exclusiveness of the receiving society, parochialism or cosmopolitanism of the host culture. Within these intersecting frameworks, the specific configurations of individuals’ orientations and, thus, their transformative potential are further influenced by their changing over time socio-demographic characteristics, economic resources, and social-cultural capital and, in the case of immigrants, their civic-political status in the receiving country. Thus constituted, (im)migrant-actors’ orientations and practices (re)constitute in turn these very social structures.

In the application to the process of international migration, the advantages of the structuration approach over other theories of the mechanisms of transnational population flows are twofold. First, it accommodates the multiplicity of generating and sustaining factors of this movement as recognized by contemporary immigration scholars. And second, it links in one coherent theoretical framework macro- and micro-structural and agentic factors that shape international migration. We shall now look how this interpretative model accounts for the process of migration to America of the eight groups chosen as case studies.

*International Migration as Structuration Process: Empirical Applications*

We begin with the conditions *initiating* international migration and, in this category, with the macro-level structures that within time- and place-specific contexts delineate the limits of the possible within which people make decisions and undertake actions regarding transnational movement. The readers will recall that except for Cuban political refugees who fled to the United States in 1959-61, in the wake of the Communist revolution in their country, the focus of our examination in the remaining groups is on “waves” of immigrants who have arrived in America during the last 25 years. We reconstruct, therefore, the macro-level economic, political, and cultural contexts of the decisions made by the pioneers of these movements during the 1980s. What can be seen right away is that these contexts and the limits they set were different for different immigrant groups.

The *macro-economic* context of the decision-making of Hong Kong and Taiwanese transnational company managers and global businessmen who settled in Los Angeles was the then current dynamic of the global economy and, specifically, global cities in which upper, capital-rich echelons on the sender and receiver side of the international migration circuit operate. The quickly rising economy of India that created a sizeable “new” middle-class composed of highly educated scientific and technical professionals, but whose employment and mobility expectations it cannot meet, and whose skills are actively solicited by the U.S. employers, provided the macro-economic context for emigration decisions made by middle-class Indians. For middle-class Korean émigrés it was the rising economy of Korea that, on a much smaller scale than in India, also created a sizeable white-collar class whose growing expectations were frustrated at home while the receiver country offered better paid employment opportunities. Russian Jewish and Polish émigrés in our sample made their decisions in the context of the transforming economies in the former Soviet Union and post-communist Poland. The push-and-pull macro-economic context of these people’s (e) migration decisions was, on the one hand, the ongoing incorporation of

post-communist East Europe into global capitalist economy causing serious structural dislocations of the labour force at all skill levels and, on the other hand, a demand for labour in the potential receiver-country economy's primary, secondary, and informal sectors. The macro-level frameworks for the decisions to emigrate made by Mexicans and Jamaicans were the already incorporated into global capitalism (semi-) peripheral economies of Mexico and Jamaica with zigzagging economic growth and with large quantities of un(der)employed labour and, especially in Jamaica, a frustrated middle-class with blocked expectations, and, on the side of the potential receiver country, the steady demand for unskilled workers and opportunities for other employment. The macro-level structures of sender and receiver economies were, however, irrelevant in the case of Cubans who left as political refugees to the geographically closest country.

*Macro-political* structural context was, however, of primary importance in the decisions of Cuban refugees. The Communist revolution in Cuba was openly hostile to the native finance and business elite viewed as dangerous "class enemies." On the receiver's side, the American government, entangled in the Cold War with the Soviet Union and its expansionist strategies, and threatened by the direct geographic proximity to the U.S. territory of a new Communist surrogate was eager to accept staunchly anti-communist Cuban refugees into the country. Although macro-political structures also mattered in setting the context for migration decisions of other groups considered here, like the economic structures, they mattered differently for differently positioned groups.

In the case of Russian Jews – already the third wave of post-war emigration from that country – it was anti-Semitism embedded in Soviet and post-Soviet state institutions accompanied by shifting policies regarding Jewish emigration on the part of the government combined, on the side of the receiver society, with the powerful pro-Soviet-Jews immigration political lobbying of American Jewish organizations and a favourable policy in this matter of the United States government. In Poland, it was the "domestication" of passports following the collapse of the Soviet-dominated regime (under Communism passports were granted for specific reasons upon application and were surrendered to state authorities upon return) and the elimination (European Union) or expedition (United States) of entry visas for short-term Polish visitors by Western countries, that opened the door, literally and symbolically, between the former antagonists.

A different political circumstance, a new "investor category" introduced in 1992 into the U.S. immigration policy granting permanent residence to immigrants who invest US \$1 million in the American economy, has facilitated the settlement in that country of Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese global

financiers and businessmen whose home governments actively encourage this type of international migration. Asian Indian scientific researchers and technical experts in our sample were actively recruited by American firms and, as such, they readily obtained work permits and permanent residence on the basis of First Employment-based Preference for Priority Workers U.S. immigration law; the Indian government remains neutral regarding this type of international migration. The macro-political context for the decisions to undertake international migration by Koreans included, likewise, the neutrality in this matter of the Korean law, and, on the side of the receiver, American society, and immigration laws granting permanent residence on the grounds of Second Employment-based Preference for members of professions holding advanced degrees. The last two groups considered here, Mexican and Jamaican émigrés in America, encountered (and their fellow nationals still do) a contradictory political context for their decisions. On the one hand, the Mexican and Jamaican governments have encouraged economic migration abroad and have allowed their émigrés in the United States a double citizenship, but, on the other hand, the immigration policies of the receiver society have made it increasingly difficult for people from these and other neighbouring countries to enter and to remain in the United States.

Two aspects of the macro-level *cultural* context of émigrés' decisions to leave should be noted. One of them, media images of America as the country of unmatched riches and “the best hope to improve one’s quality of life,” and as the society “open for all” has been relevant, as acknowledged in studies, for the majority – six out of the eight groups examined here: Poles and Russian Jews (the “American Legend” there going back to the previous great migration wave at the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century), Koreans, Jamaicans, Indians, and Mexicans. But this consideration was less relevant for the *taikongren* (globe-trotter) Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese global businessmen who move around the world from one global city to the next. And less so, too, for Cuban refugees forced, out of their country by the political revolution who left for the country that was close and that accepted them.

The other aspect of the cultural context of individual and family decisions to migrate is the culture of migration. In the earlier review of migration theories, culture of migration was placed as the local-level contributing factor. I consider it here also as a potential macro- or national-level factor because, where it does exist, the group’s collective recognition of its national or ethnic world Diaspora referred to in school textbooks, in national literature and at national celebrations, “naturalizes” international migration in the eyes of group members by making it a component of national/ethnic collective identity. This collective recognition of one’s

group's world Diaspora as part of national or ethnic history and symbolic unity can be identified – and potentially matter for decision-making as early as the initiation phase of migration – in seven out of eight cases examined here. Asian Indians, Jamaicans, and Chinese have had a long history of international migration and settlement around the world (only recently to the United States). Russian Jews' and Poles' diasporic history also dates back a long time, and includes the United States. And Cubans and Mexicans have had a long history of migrations to America. The only group without a diasporic component of group self-identity appear to be Koreans.

We turn now to the *local-level* factors that contributed to the decisions to leave for the United States made by members of our eight immigrant groups. Here, too, the contexts of decision-making by the émigrés had different components for particular groups, making for the different overall frameworks.

The already-noted diverse macro-economic contexts of potential migrant's decision-making reflected at the local levels. It was the world-economy's operation in global cities for Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese, blocked advancement opportunities in their home-country locations for middle-class Indians, Koreans, and better educated Jamaicans, Russian Jews, and Poles combined, on the receiver-country side, with the demand for skilled workers for a higher remuneration than at home in major American cities. For Mexicans and lower-class Poles and Jamaicans, it was structural un(der)employment in their home-country locations combined with the demand for unskilled and service work, again paying higher wages than those obtainable at home, in the receiver country's agriculture (Mexicans) and major American cities (Mexicans, Poles, and Jamaicans). For Cuban political refugees' decisions to leave the country the home- and host-country local economic and, for that matter, any other (except political) contexts were not primarily relevant.

Interestingly, for several of the immigrant groups considered here: Mexicans, Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese, Russian Jews, and Poles, pre-established ethnic networks of support, typically considered as a trans-local factor sustaining the extant international migration, already played a role in the initiating phase of this movement. For the Chinese, these were long-established transnational business networks, primarily located in world global cities and composed of extended family members and fellow-ethnic (Chinese) professional acquaintances dispersed around the globe. For Mexicans, large ethnic colonies of old-time Mexicans in the Southwest functioned, or at least could be perceived by potential migrants, as a natural recourse in case of need. Between 30 and 40 percent of contemporary Russian Jewish and Polish households have a family member or an acquaintance in America

from the earlier waves of transatlantic migration with whom they maintain regular or sporadic contacts. The majority of these “contacts” concentrate in a few American cities, especially New York (Jews) and Chicago (Poles), and also Philadelphia, Boston, and Detroit. The receiver-country side, then, through information about jobs and saving opportunities provided by social support networks, had usually a specific location in America for the potential migrants from these groups.

Earlier waves of Jamaican and Korean immigrants were also already established in American cities, but their ethnic colonies had mainly a lower- and lower-middle-class composition, distinct from the middle-class profile of a large proportion of the 1980s immigrants in these groups. It was, then, only after they came to the United States, when many found their upward mobility aspirations frustrated, that these recent middle-class immigrants began using their groups’ pre-existing ethnic networks as coping tools.

The pre-existing transnational social support networks coexist with pre-established local cultures of migration. In an example representative of the groups considered here, the parents of Lech Walesa, the leader of the Polish *Solidarity* movement and the former President of independent Poland, came to America [for the first time] in 1980 invited by their relatives to earn money to support their family back home. “Their decision to go,” reminisced Walesa in 1987, “was dictated by common sense and tradition: in our family there had always been someone on the other side of the ocean. It was in our blood: one or the other went over there so that the rest of the family could count on some security and a chance of financial help (Walesa 1987: 33; similarly “networked” across the ocean, Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese global migrant-capitalists do not have to worry, of course, about financial help for their families at home).

Finally, the *individual-level* factors, or human capital, that played a role in the émigrés’ decisions to leave their home-countries. We begin with the best-equipped groups. The Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese potential émigrés, men rather than women, had a considerable financial capital combined with superior entrepreneurial skills, the know-how in transnational business and a good familiarity with English. Their middle-class Indian counterparts (men) had high professional education in the leading fields of 21<sup>st</sup>-century science and technology economy and (women) educational and medical services combined with English fluency and what sociologists call “advance socialization,” that is pre-emigration socialization, a remnant of the British colonial education, into the Western (especially English) cultural orientations and way of life. At the time of leaving their home country, first-wave Cuban émigrés had at their disposition a sizeable financial capital and very good entrepreneurial skills, but no or very limited English.

Positioned lower, although for different reasons, in terms of human capital “coping tools,” were middle-class Koreans, Russian Jews, Poles, and Jamaicans who in the 1980s and 1990s considered, and decided, to leave for the United States. College-educated Koreans, men and women, had diplomas in the fields not easily transferable to the American labour market and they had no or only limited familiarity with English. Polish men and women spoke passable English but their professional diplomas, in the areas of demand in America (medicine and its servicing occupations, dentistry, engineering), required licensing that involved the necessity of taking (and paying for) courses followed by a series of exams. About 40 percent of Russian Jews, men and women, were either already retired or approaching retirement at the time of making decisions to emigrate, so their human capital or the basic educational-occupational part of it, were not relevant for their future in America; the remainder held good and transferable occupations, but their English fluency was insufficient. Middle-class Jamaican men and women considering emigration to America had high-school (majority) or higher education, held white-collar or small-business jobs, had high achievement aspirations, and had native fluency in English, but they were black – the colour of the skin that in the United States still detracts from one’s human capital even at the higher echelons of social stratification.

Lower-class Mexicans, Poles, and Jamaicans who during the 1980s and 1990s considered leaving for America had the lowest human-capital ranking from the point of view of the opportunities for upward mobility – but not material accumulation – in the receiver country. In the case of Poles and Mexicans, this capital, or its limitations, rather, included low-level education and occupational skills and no or rudimentary ability to speak English. In the case of Mexicans and Jamaicans, a “debit” in their human capital from the perspective of making it in America was a dark shade of their skins.

We now turn to the *decisions* to leave made in these multiple contexts by émigrés from the eight groups considered here, and to different dimensions of their agency involved in these acts. This “agentic” part of the presentation of the initial phase of international migration process is conjecture on my part rather than a strictly empirical reconstruction for two reasons. First, as already pointed out, most immigrants from the groups examined here have lived in America since the 1980s, so they *already made* their decisions to leave. Second, whereas there exist studies I could draw on for the reconstructions presented thus far, except for Russian Jews and Poles in Philadelphia (and Jamaicans in London, but not in New York), the recently formulated structuration model for the interpretation of international migration process, and, of concern here, its agency dimension, has not yet

been empirically applied to these cases. What I present, then, is a projection back in time of what could have been, or what were the likely considerations of members of our eight immigrant groups in making their decisions to leave for America, considering the then broader and immediate circumstances of their lives. It is also an invitation to the readers who find themselves persuaded by the structuration model to go out and apply it empirically to the study of international migration process of these and other immigrant groups. Interestingly, although the macro- and micro-level contexts of the decisions to emigrate were different for members of each of the eight groups examined here, all of them decided to go.

The decidedly enabling macro- and micro-level contexts of Hong Kong and Taiwan global businessmen-potential émigrés to Los Angeles in the 1980s, their high-powered human capital well-fitting occupational challenges awaiting them in the United States, and the embedded culture of migration in their occupational group, probably simplified their decisions to go. Their iterational agency, otherwise called by sociologists the *habitus*, that is, the un-reflexive reactivation in actors' present pursuits of their habitual ways of thought and action from the past, enhanced in this case the agency's practical dimension, which, in turn, supported the projective vision of further augmented capital or business transactions. The opportunity called, our decision-makers had the awareness of the "expand or perish" iron logic of big-scale capitalist operations, well-practiced know-how of how to deal with similar challenges and well-probed transnational networks in which to nest their activities, so they went. These decisions were, of course, taken within the family and considered in the context of its then-current needs, but the (limited) information that exists suggests that men (not women) ultimately made these decisions according to their professional priorities and left (or left first) leaving their wives and children at home.

The macro- and local-level contexts of the decisions to leave for the United States to be made by middle-class Indian professionals were also expedient, although for a different constellation of reasons than in the case of Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese emigrants. Transferable occupational skills in specialities in high demand in the receiver society, the know-how of English-language ways of life, and high professional ambitions were weighted against deep attachments to and responsibilities for the home country shared by members of its educated elite, and a frustrating realization of blocked opportunities in that country for the realization of the decision-makers' professional ambitions. Their decisions to leave were likely the outcome of practical-evaluative and projective agentic dimensions, that is, by the assessment of their professional prospects in India vis-à-vis the opportunities awaiting them in America. As in the previous case, these decisions were also

made within the family and in consideration of its priorities and obligations: here, too, it was men who had surer chances for the immediate employment in America, who left first, and the wives who followed. The sporadic evidence that exists suggests, however, that emigration decisions of members of India's educated elite could have been more difficult or less matter-of-fact than those of the Chinese global investors and businessmen, because of the former's public commitment to their country's ongoing modern nation-state formation process. This dilemma could have been eased by the leavers' habitual recognition of the Indian *Oikumene*, or world Diaspora, as a long-standing national symbolic community which they would join, and continue in this way their responsible involvement in home-country affairs.

Given their good education and frustrated ambitions of professional advancement at home, but no solid promise of better careers in America similar to that faced by their Chinese and Indian counterparts, middle-class Koreans' decisions to emigrate were likely to have resulted from the practical and projective agency considerations. Their human capital, and, especially, high-level education combined with personal drive to achieve and determination to do so, appeared to guarantee good employment in the country perceived by the outside world as "meritocracy for the willing." This assessment was accompanied by a strong projective vision of a professionally and materially accomplished life for themselves and their children. As in the previous cases, these emigration decisions: their timing and the specific destinations in America, were negotiated within the families. In a reversal of the earlier post-war trend when Korean brides (of American soldiers and personnel first engaged in the Korean War and then stationed in South Korea in the American bases) came in much greater numbers than men, since the 1980s, as the native Korean tradition dictated, men have been the first to go.

The decisions to leave for the United States made by middle-class Poles and Jamaicans seem to have been arrived at on the basis of similar, practical and projective, agentic components, reinforced in both cases by the habituated culture of migration (see the earlier quotation from Lech Walesa) and, in the case of Poles, the risk-diminishing established presence in several American cities of Polish ethnic communities with middle-class components. Although middle-class Jamaicans considering emigration to America were aware of the race problem in that country, as the existing studies of this group's migration process indicate, their projective agency seem to have "overcome" this hindrance: they were educated, they were ambitious (unlike "lazy" native-born American blacks) and they were going to achieve in that country what they set out to do. Here, too, decisions to leave were negotiated within families, but a much greater proportion of

Polish and Jamaican women than in the Korean case were among pioneer émigrés. In Polish case, it reflected a significant independence, occupational and financial, of women achieved under the communist state where more than 70 per cent of married females were gainfully employed, and a secure landing promised by pre-existing social support networks in Polish ethnic communities in America. Jamaican women have likewise been traditionally independent occupationally, and the “security net” was provided by the geographic proximity between Jamaica and the United States that made the return quick and easy.

Like the context of their emigration, first-wave Cuban political refugees’ decisions to leave for the United States were differently motivated than those of members of any other groups considered here. These decisions can be reconstructed from personal interviews and memoirs written by the exiles. Put in the language of the structuration model, the decisions to flee to America made by the wealthy Cuban refugees were the outcomes of the immediately practical and projective considerations that encompassed entire families. It was, on the one hand, the danger not only to their possessions but physically to themselves (the revolutions tend, especially in their first phase, to destroy groups perceived as the enemies of their causes). On the other hand, these members of the Cuban pre-revolutionary elite were convinced that the Castro regime would be eliminated by the United States in a very short time and – a projective dimension of their decisions to temporarily resettle in the neighbouring Miami – they would soon safely return home. Almost the entire Cuban capitalist elite, its business leaders and their families, emigrated on these grounds between 1959 and 1961 following the Communist takeover, and they have been waiting for a chance to return to the *Cuba libre* ever since.

The context of third-wave Russian Jews’ decisions to leave for America was the economic turmoil and political instability of the post-Soviet transition combined with now-latent-now-open, deeply rooted anti-Semitism in everyday Russian life. All three agency’s dimensions were involved in their emigration decisions. The iterational or habitual Diaspora mentality was supported by the exit of two previous waves (early 1970s and, again, the end of that decade, as the Soviet authorities vacillated in their policies vis-à-vis this group) of Jewish emigrants many of whom they knew and maintained contact with across the ocean. The practical considerations included, on the one hand, blocked opportunities for professional advancement for those still in the working age and a politically insecure situation in Russia for the entire group and, on the other hand, a secure feeling that their travel and the initial period of adjustment in America would be assisted by American Jewish organizations set up especially for this purpose. And the projective

component of their decision-making was the desire, shared by all émigrés, for civic-political security of living as Jews in America, and, for the working-age people, the expectations of occupational advancement and comfortable living standards; those already pensioned or approaching retirement expected peaceful and contented existence. These decisions involved the entire households and in most cases the entire families left.

Lower-class Poles' decisions to leave for America were likewise the outcomes of all three agency's components, but they involved different considerations than those of Russian Jews and, for that matter, any of the much better socio-economically or politically positioned groups considered above. Most of them planned to go to America on tourist visas (relatively easily obtainable for a three-month period) with the intention of undertaking unauthorized employment; their stays were to be sojourns, long enough to accumulate enough savings to return to Poland with the means for a better life.

The iterational component of lower-class Poles' decision-making involved, similar to their middle-class fellow nationals, the deeply internalized culture of migration at the national (the diasporic element of the collective national identity) and local (a long-standing tradition of neighbours moving back and forth between Poland and America) levels. The practical element included a constellation of factors. First, a sense of "can do" as unauthorized workers in the informal sector of the American economy, based on the well-tested under the Soviet regime coping strategy of beating-the-system/bending-the-law (also referred to as the *homo sovieticus* syndrome), informed by disrespect for the laws, policies, and institutions and preference for informal *dojscia* (ins) and *kombinacje* (shady arrangements as in wheeling and dealing). Second, good skills in diverse services very much in demand, as they knew from their fellow-national kin and acquaintances already in the United States, in the informal sector of the American labour market: construction, carpentry, plumbing, and mechanics in the case of men, and, in the case of women, house-cleaning and home-care. Third, there was the risk-diminishing presence in America of pre-established Polish ethnic communities whose members would provide assistance in finding housing and unauthorized employment. The projective element of the decisions made by lower-class Poles to go the United States was the expectation to save enough money to afford a much higher standard of living back in Poland. As in all previous cases, decisions to leave were negotiated within families, and employable women went almost as often as men, unless they were prevented from doing so by pregnancy or small children at home.

Made in similar by and large macro- and micro-level contexts, lower-class Mexicans' and Jamaicans' decisions to leave for the United States contained basically similar agency components. Those who expected to find employment in the informal sector of the American economy were familiar with the beat-the-system/bend-the-law coping strategies as the resource of the poor in the world-capitalist system. This practical know-how diminishing the risk of emigration combined, for the lower-class Mexican and Jamaican decision-makers alike and regardless of the American labour market sector they intended to work in, with their capacity and willingness to work hard in manual occupations, with long-established local cultures of international migration after bread, and with pre-existing social support networks in the region/city émigrés expected to go to in the destination country. An additional component in practical consideration of lower-class Mexicans and Jamaicans regarding migration to America, absent in the Polish case, was the geographic proximity of their home countries to the United States that provided another risk-diminishing element in their decisions by allowing for easy back and forth movements between home and host locations. Like those of their Polish counter-parts, the projective considerations of lower-class Mexican and Jamaican potential migrants to America were expectations of big savings that would permit them to build new, materially affluent and economically safe lives upon return to their home countries. And, as in all cases examined here, decisions to leave were negotiated within families in consideration of its then needs and priorities. Due to material distress and tradition, men and women left in almost equal proportions.

The remainder of this paper identifies new conditions that have *sustained* (e)migration to the United States of members of our eight groups in addition to the persisting circumstances that initiated this movement. The noted earlier macro-level economic, political, and cultural forces that triggered off (e)migration to America of the pioneers, have basically persisted through the early 2000s for all groups except two. Emigration of business-class Cuban refugees was ended “from above” by new-regime political authorities by the mid-1960s, but only after a large wave of working-class Cubans managed to escape to Miami. The cessation of the outflow of Russian Jews – by the late 1990s it became just a trickle – had its reason in demography. After several large emigration waves since the 1970s, there were simply not many of them left in the country.

Two additional macro-political circumstances on the receiver-country side should be noted. The USA Patriot Act, instituted in the wake of September 11, 2001 and establishing new grounds of inadmissibility to the country, has by and large left unaffected members of the considered

here national groups, except – not to be dismissed as a factor discouraging immigration to America – for reported incidents of mistreatment of Indian visa applicants/arrivals who, because of their appearance, are (mis)taken for potential Muslim terrorists. And, used by members of all considered here groups in the sustaining phase of (e)migration, has been the U.S. Family-Based immigration law, allowing entry and permanent residence to spouses, parents, and children of American citizens, and to spouses and unmarried children of permanent residents.

The micro-level conditions that triggered (e)migration to the United States of members of our eight groups have continued, too, to contribute to their out-movement through the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but some of them expanded into qualitatively different forces sustaining this movement, and some new ones developed. Those transformed-by-expansion facilitators included, in particular, migration support networks stretching between home- and host-countries. Growing numbers of migrants created extensive new webs – transnational structures – of travel and employment assistance that can be used by more international travellers: Poles, Mexicans, lower-class Jamaicans, in addition to pre-existing networks between home- and host-country-based fellow nationals. In groups without such pre-existing, old-time transnational webs of assistance, such as middle-class Koreans and Jamaicans, the newly established ones served a similar function. Although (e)migration to America of Hong Kong and Taiwanese global investors and transnational company managers and Indian professionals has been primarily prompted and sustained by current business opportunities and employers' demand, migration of the followers depended, too, on networks of information and contacts created by the pioneers.

The emergence of these transnational support structures as the result of (e)migrants' actions (international migration) that have, in turn, sustained further movement to America of their fellow nationals, exemplifies the reciprocal constitution of social structures and actors' undertakings posited by the structuration model. The creation by (im)migrant pioneers of the ethnic occupational (sub)structures or niches in the American economy: the Cuban ethnic enclave employing the entire socioeconomic spectrum of this group in Miami, a predominantly Mexican workforce in the Southwest's agriculture, the disproportionately Korean small shop-keeping in poor minority neighbourhoods in Los Angeles, a prevailing Jamaican presence in the Caribbean markets in New York's Crown Heights, or the predominance of Poles in the informal construction and private-service sectors in Philadelphia, has provided employment opportunities for fellow-national (im)migrants who followed on their footsteps. Another illustration of the structure-agency reconstitution process has been the creation by pioneer

(e)migrants of local cultures of migration in groups (e.g., Koreans) that did not have it, or, in those that did (Indians, Jamaicans, Mexicans, Poles), by pioneer (e)migrants making these cultures familiar and personally relevant to the followers because of the shared life experience and worldviews.

Another factor sustaining the movement of members of our six groups to their specific destination places in America through the mid-2000s, and related to expanded transnational support networks and local migration cultures, has been enhanced human capital of later émigrés in terms of the know-how required to negotiate their lives in America specific to the civic-political and economic situations there of their groups, which they learned from the pioneers. Thus, for example, middle-class Koreans planning to follow up to Los Angeles learn from their predecessors about the difficulties the latter have faced in trying to re-establish their occupational positions in America and about the possibilities of small-business employment, viewed as a temporary adjustment strategy. Jamaicans hear from their fellow nationals already in New York about the requirements of finding a job in city's public sector, and those who consider ethnic business, about the demand for particular merchandise, home-country supply conditions, and possibilities of business expansion. Poles planning to undertake unauthorized employment on tourist visas, learn from their already thusly preoccupied overseas colleagues about ways to locate such work, its conditions and remuneration.

Koreans already in Los Angeles pass on the information to those considering to follow about abandoned small stores in the Los Angeles minority neighbourhoods and arrange for loans for newcomers to purchase them. Jobs for follow-up Mexican and Polish (e)migrants in the informal sectors of the American Southwest and Philadelphia economies are often arranged in advance by personal agreements with friends to whom later a reciprocal favour will be due or, in a more "businesslike" way (although still informally), by selling it to someone else for an agreed-on sum of money to be paid upon the assumption of the position. Thus, these unauthorized workers can maintain the right connections for the next sojourn. Migrant women have been reported to rely on chain replacements in "unofficial" cleaning and other domestic service work, so that when one returns home, another takes her job and when the first one comes back to the United States and gets the same job, the second one goes home.

(E)migrants who plan to follow the pioneers with undocumented political status in America learn from them, too, ways to "negotiate," that is, to go around the American immigration laws, thus enhancing in advance the "American" know-how of their human capital. For example, the implementation of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act

in 1996 increased penalties for visa overstayers by forbidding such migrants another entry to the United States for a ten-year period. By appropriating to their purposes the “gaps” between different, often inconsistent, policies regulating (im)migrant entry and the duration of sojourn, undocumented Mexican and Polish migrants responded to this new legal situation – and passed on the information to fellow nationals to follow them on to the United States – with an immediate increase of back-and-forth travels within the legally prescribed time. In this way, migrants from both groups avoid the dangers of undocumented political status (but still break the law by illicit employment) by returning to their home-country every six months, remaining there for a few weeks, and coming back to the United States, often to resume the same jobs in the informal sector.

The (im)migrants already in America have also taught their followers the ways to manipulate to their purposes the so-called “diversity visa lotteries” introduced by the U.S. government in the early 1990s to make available permanent residence permits to “persons selected at random from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States.” In response to this opportunity, *homo-sovieticus*-smart Polish tourist-workers and, after them, other unauthorized migrants each obtained hundreds of lottery tickets to increase their chances of winning and, as the information about this tactic spread across the Atlantic through the foreign-language press and word of mouth, thousands of undocumented (im)migrants followed suit. As a result, in the first visa lottery drawings, Poles represented about one-third of the total of number of “winners” (their share in the total undocumented (im) migrant population in America has been a fraction of this number). The winners immediately organized the now legitimate voyage to America of their families left at home, prioritizing those whose closest relatives could follow later and, thus, contributing to the growth of the Polish immigrant population in America. Great numbers of undocumented Mexican (im) migrants in the American Southwest made similar use of the “amnesty” law passed by the U.S. Congress in the late 1980s, granting permanent residence to unauthorized individuals – and, thus, through the Family-Based Immigration law, to their immediate family members still in Mexico – who had resided in America since 198

A new local structure sustaining international migration to America that has emerged as the result of pioneer-phase outflow of people has been the redistribution of income in the sending localities and, in particular, a proliferation of better-off households. It has created, in turn, the so-called *demonstration effect*, or the effect of a visibly improved material well-being of the families of American émigrés’ in home-country locations, including houses/apartments and their furnishings, cars, colour TVs with satellite

dishes, and stereo systems, computers, electronic kitchen equipment, fashionable clothing, and other symbols of middle-class affluence projected by Western media, on the readiness of others to go there as well. The same effect is produced by photographs and narratives of their better lifestyles in America sent and told to those at home by immigrants who decided to stay abroad for good.

Altogether, to the extent they can master their own lives, these developments enhance the “let’s go” effects of the practical and projective agency dimensions on the decisions to migrate to America made by the followers of the pioneers, further contribute to the persistence or even growth of this movement (Cubans, as we remember, were prevented from going by higher-powered macro-level structures). The practical information, know-how fitted to the specific conditions they find themselves in the destination places and the security of assistance they receive from fellow nationals already there, significantly diminish the risk of follow-up migration. At the same time, translated into the tangible images of their happier émigré kin and neighbours, the projective vision of the significantly improved professional opportunities and/or material standard of living either at home or in the host location to be achieved through (e)migration, has an immediate mobilizing effect on those considering following.

We have reconstructed here within the framework of the structuration model different constellations of macro-, local- and individual-level factors that made first the pioneers and then their followers from the eight groups considered here (e)migrate to America since the 1980s. The lesson from this exercise for those who would plan a similar study on one or, comparatively, more (im)migrant groups is twofold. The first one calls for the examination against empirical evidence, and checked for differentiating effects of the main sociological dividers such as class, gender, and race, of all potential migration-inducing and migration-sustaining contributing elements. The other lesson is to pay close attention throughout the study, including data collection and analysis, to the diversity of economic, political, and cultural contexts that trigger (e)migration of differently positioned groups and of the resulting trajectories of their migratory movements, so that the proposed reconstructions carefully reflect this multiplicity.

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