

Migration and development: dominant theories

الهجرة والتنمية: أبرز النظريات

Mustapha Omrane*

Khemis-Miliana University, Algeria

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Abstract:

Over the past six decades, research has multiplied to answer a central question: why do individuals migrate? This article tries to present the main theories most discussed in the literature, essentially Anglo-Saxon, in view of its richness.

Some of the theories emphasize the motivations that drive individuals to take this path, while other work highlights the macro-dimension, for example in the European Union's economic policy, in relation to the differences in levels of development between developed and less developed countries.

Keywords: international migration, migration theories, development, Motives, people.

المخلص:

على مدى العقود الستة الماضية، تضاعفت الأبحاث للإجابة على سؤال مركزي: لماذا يهاجر الأفراد؟ تحاول هذه المقالة تقديم النظريات الرئيسية الأكثر مناقشة في الأدبيات، وخاصة الأنجلو ساكسونية، نظراً لثرائها.

وتؤكد بعض النظريات على الدوافع التي تدفع الأفراد إلى السير في هذا الطريق، بينما تسلط أعمال أخرى الضوء على البعد الكلي للسياسة الاقتصادية، كما هو الحال بالنسبة لبلدان الاتحاد الأوروبي على سبيل المثال، فيما يتعلق بالاختلافات في مستويات التنمية بين البلدان المتقدمة النمو والبلدان الأقل نمواً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هجرة دولية، نظريات الهجرة، تنمية، دوافع، افراد.

* Mustapha Omrane, mustapha.omrane@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Must contain an appropriate introduction to the subject, then expose the research problem and develop the appropriate assumptions, in addition, define the objectives of the research and methodology (at the beginning of each paragraph in the article left a space set automatically and not manually / leading 1 for the entire article / font Times New Roman, size 12).

The international literature on the issue of migration is very rich, especially because of the multitude of disciplines: sociology, economics, demography, history, etc., and also for the political interest on this matter in the world. We can therefore find work on different periods, different socio-economic and political contexts and methodologies. This richness requires selection work which has been carried out according to certain criteria: among the most cited publications, recent and less recent, quantitative and of different disciplines. This approach, even if it cannot be exhaustive, makes it possible to widen the field of vision and to construct a theoretical framework as wide as possible.

Literature research shows that overall migration is affected by several factors. Individual perceptions on their economic and social conditions, but also their perceptions of economic opportunities in other countries. In fact, behind individual logics, there are macro-economic situations that influence the individual decision of mobility, especially from less-developed countries or areas to more developed ones. In those economies, labor supply and demand, geographical income differentials and economic transformations as from industrial to numeric model is relevant in mobility dynamics.

Demographic dimension is a central factor for the origin countries and for destination countries, which shaped international migration since the 19th century and continued strongly after the Second world war. In this sense, population ageing is playing an important role in developed countries that are still seeking migrants, while increasing working-age populations in Southern countries. Political context is a major issue that guide mobility, particularly in case of conflicts and civil wars. Governmental policies for migrants hosting are implemented in many developed. Geographical context is steering international mobility around the world, for example through proximity between developed with developing countries. These factors play a role at different levels and vary in intensity depending on the context, period and region.

It should be emphasized that the most cited theories and the most discussed in the international thoughts on migration are those of economic

essence (see among others: Todaro, 1969; Wilkinson, 1970; Zlinsky, 1971). Even if this dimension remains valid to explain the phenomenon in many cases, the reality shows that there are other concerns and are related in particular to political, cultural or climate factors. Indeed, many recent global examples show that the largest waves of emigration have occurred as a result of political instability and even civil wars. Environment is an emergent dimension which influences more and more mobility in many areas in the world. For the past 20 years, the United Nations has been forecasting a large increase in the number of migrants as a direct result of climate change over the next 20 years.

Although economic motivation is very often presented as a determining factor in migration, it is not sufficient to reflect migration that is observed in some individuals rather than others within the same social class. Socio-demographic and even cultural factors are also essential, as shown by the available research. This reality makes migration a complex phenomenon and justifies observing both immigrants already settled in their host country and those who have not yet crossed borders but would like to do so. It is in this perspective that this work tries to understand the conditions that lead young people to want to leave to live in a foreign country.

2 - Migration: a complex issue

At the international level, there is no consensus on the concept of migration, including within the major world bodies. At the international level, there is no legally recognized definition of migrant. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (United nations, 2020), the term, in French, means “any person who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year, regardless of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and regardless of the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. However, it is common to include certain categories of short-term migrants, such as seasonal agricultural workers who move at the time of planting or harvesting”(United nations, 2020). While on the same site, the definition in English is totally different. For its part, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) adopts a very broad definition of the concept but distinguishes other types of migrants according to the legal status or motivation of the migrant: regular, irregular, economic, family, climate change, etc. (IOM, 2020).

The question of definition is crucial as migration can take many forms and the diversity observed in causes and contexts imposes methodological

positions. In recent years, the temptations of illegal entry (*Harga* in the North African dialect, i.e. burning the borders) into the European territory of thousands of people clearly pose this problem, including on the institutional level where economic migrants merge with refugees. Even legal entries can lead to installations. Willekens et al., (2016) emphasize the legal aspect by stressing that the term migration overlaps with that of mobility which takes several forms: a displacement can turn into migration, travelers with a visa may decide to stay at the place of destination (which becomes irregular emigration), students may remain in the host country after graduation, etc.

As an example of this conceptual evolution, Carling and Collins (2018) based on a bibliographic study of the period 1990-2016, observe that the concept drivers of migration, which appeared in 2002, is increasingly common in publications on the theme of migration, unlike the terms “factors”, “determinants” and “causes” which are older and relate to a greater number of bibliographic references. This concept emerged through work on the links between climate change and migration, in a context of growing international interest in the issue of climate change (see for example Van Dalen, Goenewold, G., & Schoorl, 2005; Bakewell, 2008). The emergence of the concept of drivers mainly reflects the caution of researchers regarding the causal relationship between the different determinants and migration in order to avoid the term “causes”.

Definitely, economists focus on the economic aspects: wage differences, cash transfers, economic rationality of migrants, etc. While sociologists and anthropologists, give more importance to the social dimension: social origin of the migrant, social network and representations. Whereas demographers are interested for example in the extent of the migration phenomenon, causes and demographic consequences of migration, characteristics of migrants, etc..

3 - Dominant theories

3-1 - Neoclassical theory

The first known work in social sciences is that of Ravenstein (1885) who supported the existence of laws that guided mobility between origin and destination regions (1885, cited by Carlin and Collins, 2018). For a long time, reflections were focused on individual logics, arguing that individuals examine the costs and benefits of migration (Piché, 2013a). In his pioneering writing, although criticized but influential in the debates, Lee (1966), in addition to individual calculations, adds personal knowledge in the areas of destination. It is true, even if the individual calculation led to a

conclusion of an expected benefit of migration, it is still necessary that the project is feasible, hence the need for support at the places of destination.

In the literature, many authors analyze migration over the long term by highlighting the relationship between economic development and emigration. Such studies, some of which emerged after World War II, analyze migration as a process whose dynamics depend on economic development, with income as the main variable.

From a strictly economic point of view, neoclassical theory explains international mobility by a geographical difference in the supply and demand of labor. Migrants are presented as rational actors who act on a rationality based on maximizing their income by going to regions in order to increase their income (Borjas, 1989, Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). Similar reasoning was proposed by Harris and Todaro (1969) in their model of analysis to explain national migration, with the income hoped for by rural to urban migrants. Arguing that at the end of these movements, incomes in sending and receiving regions will tend to converge, thus underlining the positive role of migration in development.

Other authors reject the underlying functionalist assumption of neo-classical models that migration decisions are based on the rational cost-benefit calculation of individuals trying to maximize their incomes. By a different lighting. The new labor migration economy introduces the concept of risk management and presents migration as a collective household strategy to overcome market failures and distribute income risks rather than as a simple Maximizing income in the face of expected wage gaps (Stark and Taylor, 1991). This approach is broader in theory and can also be applied to domestic migration in the same country or between countries with comparable economic levels. De Haas (2011) criticizes this analysis for neglecting macro-structural factors such as the state, policies, labor markets and their impact on the choices made by individuals.

3- 2 - Push-pull theory

Later, push-pull theory is one of the most advanced theories to explain international migration. The central idea is that there are attractiveness factors that attract individuals to a destination or repulsivity factors that push them to leave. This theory is based on a spatial imbalance: individuals migrate because there are socio-economic or political forces that push them to leave or because there are the same factors in the destination that attract them (De Haas, 2011; Migali et al., 2018). Many subsequent works, especially those based on empirical surveys, have brought many nuances to

the classical push-pull theory. The main limitation is that it does not take into account sufficiently the social character of migration in the sense that there are social conditions that favor it and its inability to explain changes in the migration pattern (see for example Boyd, 1989; De Haas; 2011; Migali et al., 2018).

3-3-Demographic transition and migration

The theories of the transition of mobility perceive the relationship between economic development and migration in inverted “U”, which means that in a first stage, incomes in the countries of origin are low and therefore there is a strong propensity for emigration, which becomes lower when incomes rise because people have no reason to leave their country (Clemens, 2014). The literature on the transition of migration names it differently, for example: «the transition of mobility» (Zelinsky, 1971); « Migration curve » (Akerman, 1976); « Migration Hump » (Martin, 1993).

Migration, as a demographic phenomenon, is widely analyzed by demographers and economists, who show in particular the links between demographic transition, economic progress and migration. Indeed, the first phase of the demographic transition is marked by a beginning of the decline in mortality, especially that of children, while the level of fertility remains sustained. The labor market continues to receive a strong demand for work that remains difficult to meet with low incomes for the labor force. When incomes are not high enough, with a young and rapidly growing population, this leads to youth emigration (Clemens, 2014).

Migration is therefore a phenomenon to be placed in the dynamics of demographic transition, as Zelinski (1971) points out. Migration has a double-edged function: firstly, it helps to alleviate the problem of youth unemployment. So to a certain extent, it's good for governments if you just take the political aspect. However, when we look at the increasing numbers of graduates and students who are leaving their country at a cost to their education and health, it can be a significant loss of human resources. While the host countries, which often lack the labor force, benefit “freely” from these sometimes well-trained migrants who contribute to progress.

This role of democratic-economic adjustment is of course obvious in the case of rich countries which maintain policies for the reception of international migrants. Needless to say, these are developed countries whose economies need workers and whose ageing and low-growth populations need young people for their overall social equilibrium.

Over the past twenty years, more and more authors have called for migration to be seen as a social product in which the individual has a role but also the household, the family, the social network, while recognizing the influence of political and economic factors. (Boyd, 1989; De Haas, 2011; Flahaux and De Haas, 2016; Ray, 2006; Carling, 2017, Collins; 2018). But the fact remains that understanding the interaction between these factors and measuring their degree of influence is essential. Collins (2018) emphasizes the influence of society and argues that an individual's interest in migration is the result of a particular social context. While Ray (2006, p. 209) considers that "aspirations are the social foundation of individual desire." Just as Carling and Collins (2018) argue about social mechanisms of dissemination: individuals can observe the material achievements of their emigrant peers and thus see migration as a realistic prospect and thus develop aspirations, what Ray (2006) calls the "window of aspirations" of individuals.

For the theory of the determinants of migration, the objective is to analyze the links between motivations, desire and the socio-economic and political context: social system, social relations, characteristics of the economy, etc., (see notably the work of Massey, 1990; Massey et al., 1993; Carling and Collins, 2018). For Massey (1990), migration continues on its own because of the persistence of the determinants that led to its development: Diaspora networks, cash transfers, demand for unskilled labor, etc.

By analyzing the phenomenon on an individual scale, some authors provide another model of analysis and propose two stages that produce migration: 1) the formation of migration aspirations and 2) the ability to implement these aspirations (Docquier et al., 2014; Carling, 2017). This conceptualization is based on the fact that there is first in the individual a desire to change his life for various reasons, then arise the aspirations of migration.

3- 4 - Transnationalism theory

In an increasingly globalized world and interconnected countries, transnationalism is a theoretical approach that proposes an analysis beyond the concepts of sending or destination nations as distinct geographical entities (Carling & Collins, 2018). Proponents of the transnational concept of migration refute the idea of the migrant as a solitary movement from a country of origin to a country of destination. They consider the genesis and subsistence of migration as something that is spread across borders, in transnational social and economic links (Levitt and Glick Schiller,

2004; Findlay and Li, 1998; Smith, 2001, cited by Carling and Collins, 2018).

To complete the picture, in the paradigm of «conflict theory», the Marxist approach considers migration as a direct flow of the spread of global capitalism and the marginalization and uprooting of rural populations in the world that have no choice but to migrate to cities (within and beyond borders) to join the urban proletariat. The solution to this situation requires a radical change of power structures through the organized resistance of the oppressed groups. Migration would therefore be a reaction of individuals who perceive this oppression. But this theory neglects the individual ability to make decisions and presents the phenomenon as an automatic reaction. Individuals become victims, which precludes any attempt at analysis (Collins, 1994; De Haas, 2014; Boyd, 1989).

In contrast to objective determinants such as income or educational attainment, the original analysis by Cai et al. (2014) focuses on well-being, a subjective determinant, to explain the intention of international migration. The work is based on a quantitative analysis of the data produced by The Gallup World Poll. Approximately 1,000 respondents over the age of 15 were surveyed by country between 2007-2012 in 154 countries. The authors conclude that individuals with a high sense of well-being have a lower desire for migration. Moreover, the correlation between the perception of well-being and the desire for migration is stronger than that observed between income and the desire for migration. In the same vein, Carling and Collins (2018) note that self-realization can be a motivation for emigration candidates who aspire to realize their potential through migration.

By analyzing Gallup World Poll data for another period 2010-2015, Migali and Scipioni (2018) show that 30% of the world's population expressed a desire for migration, while about 1% actually migrated. The desire for migration therefore overestimates potential migrants. The authors analyze migration for three groups of “migrant senders” countries by economic level: low, medium and high income. The authors find that the causal relationship between the degree of wealth is not related to the desire for migration in low- and high-income countries, but is established in middle-income countries where the richest individuals are more likely to emigrate. In the middle-income group (such as those in the Maghreb), the social network and economic level are the most important determinants of migration (Migali and Scipioni, 2018). This correlation was verified by another study in Egypt where young people from the richest households

were more likely to emigrate (David & Jarreau, 2016). In terms of level of education, Migali and Scipioni (2018) also found that individuals with a high level of education are more likely to want to leave than those with a primary level. These correlations are valid in all groups of countries regardless of economic level.

The literature review on migration shows richness on the theoretical level. Multiplicity as well as diversity of migration theories, especially in the past sixteenth years reflect a research evolution on this topic and provide an opportunity to engage an interesting discussion on the theoretical and methodological sides. This diversity imposes on us foresight in conceptualization and reaffirms the awareness for the research community to multiply interdisciplinary approaches. In this work, theories on migration can be used by researchers trying to understand to what extent why and how migrants decide to migrate.

- Conclusion

The conclusion includes a brief summary, the results obtained by the researcher, and his additions, proposing solutions and formulating recommendations and future assumptions depending on the nature of the study.

Fortunately, there is an abundant theoretical knowledge around international migration. But the main part of this work is based on an economic vision of the phenomenon, particularly in regard to the contexts of the countries of departure and arrival as well as the motivations of migrants in relation to income. Indeed, many Anglo-Saxon authors take a certain methodological approach to show, or try to show, a new aspect of the economic factor. Of course, this is done by focusing on the individual and sometimes family logic behind the migration project. However, migration is very clearly a demographic variable that plays a role of demographic adjustment for both countries of origin and countries of arrival. In this sense, it's pleased to see more and more work addressing this theme by adopting a demographic approach.

Because it is the multiplication of analytical work that makes it possible to construct theories with a demographic vision. This is essential as much research shows the links between migration and the demographic characteristics of migrants and their households. The latter seem to play, in most cases, a decisive role in migration, which is both a family and an individual project. From a methodological perspective, a number of studies are based on an analysis of quantitative data on international migration that

relate to the socio-economic and economic characteristics of migrants and their families. The availability of such data, always very sparsely available, is an essential condition for seriously studying all migration dimensions.

In reality, the creation of databases requires the establishment of international cooperation in order to collect reliable information both on individuals in their country of origin, but also in the countries of arrival. Unfortunately, migration issue is surrounded by many sensitivities and has become an issue of domestic policy whether for the countries of departure or destination, which makes such cooperation, if necessary, difficult at the international level.

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