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Contemporary Immigration: Theoretical Perspectives On Its Determinants And Modes Of Incorporation[1]

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This article reviews conventional theories about different aspects of labor migration: its origins, stability over time, and patterns of migrant settlement. For each of these aspects, we provide alternative explanatory hypotheses derived from the notions of increasing articulation of the international system and the social embeddedness of its various subprocesses, including labor flows. A typology of sources and outcomes of contemporary immigration is presented as an heuristic device to organize the diversity of such movements as described in the empirical literature.

A common feature of the theories that social science elaborate to apprehend reality is that they become widely accepted at a time when the phenomena which they explain have evolved beyond their grasp. The peculiar dynamics that follow see ideas become progressively accepted in textbooks and popular discourse as their relevance for the understanding of contemporary events declines. The more rapid the transformation of the phenomenon in question, the greater the likelihood of this gap. In this manner, theories which should be of historical interest continue to hold sway, leading to incomplete analyses and erroneous predictions.

Among the topics of interest to contemporary social science, few are more dynamic than international migration, especially as it has manifested itself in recent years. Hence, the danger that the theoretical apparatus used to apprehend migration may lag behind its actual evolution becomes all the greater. This article focuses on the origins of migration, the stability of the

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process over time, the patterns of settlement of recent immigrants, and the ideas that have been advanced to explain these events. There is an identifiable corpus of concepts and hypotheses which may be regarded as the theoretical orthodoxy in this field and which continues to dominate both academic research and popular discourse.

A review of these ideas and how they stand in relation to current manifestations of the reality to which they presumably apply is in order. By itself, however, this exercise is not enough since critical analyses have been conducted several times in the past. For this reason, discussion of orthodox theories will be supplemented by the introduction of alternative views about each of the phenomena in question. These alternative viewpoints conclude with a typology of origins and outcomes of recent immigration and with a proposed reorientation of the general theoretical perspective that has guided research in this area.

ORIGINS

The most widely held approach to the origins of international migration — "push-pull" theories — sees labor flows as an outcome of poverty and backwardness in the sending areas. Representatives of this perspective provide lists of "push factors" — economic, social and political hardships in the poorest parts of the world — and "pull factors" — comparative advantages in the more advanced nation-states — as causal variables determining the size and directionality of immigrant flows. These lists are invariably elaborated *post factum,* that is, after particular movements have already been initiated. The compilation of such lists is usually guided by two underlying assumptions: first, the expectation that the most disadvantaged sectors of the poorer societies are most likely to participate in labor migration; and second, the assumption that such flows arise spontaneously out of the sheer existence of inequalities on a global scale.

On the surface, these assumptions appear self-evident: workers migrate from Mexico to the United States and from Turkey to West Germany and not vice versa. However, the tendency of the push-pull model to be applied to those flows which are already taking place conceals its inability to explain why similar movements do not arise out of other equally "poor" nations or why sources of outmigration tend to concentrate in certain regions and not in others within the same sending countries.

Thus, the proclivity of these theories to the *post hoc* recitation of "obvious" causes makes them incapable of predicting the two principal differences in the origin of migration: 1) differences among collectivities — primarily nation-states — in the size and directionality of migrant flows; 2) differences among individuals within the same country or region in their propensities to migrate. The first question concerns macrostructural determinants of

labor displacements while the second concerns their micro- structural causes. The difference between these levels of analysis is also absent from most standard push-pull writings.

At the broader level of determination, the onset of labor flows does not arise out of invidious comparisons of economic advantage, but out of a history of prior contact between sending and receiving societies. History is replete with instances in which an absolute wage advantage in economically expanding areas has meant nothing to the population of more isolated regions; when their labor has been required, it has had to be coerced out of them. In general, the emergence of regular labor outflows of stable size and known destination requires the prior penetration by institutions of the stronger nation-state into those of the weaker sending ones. Political and economic conditions in the latter are then gradually molded to the point where migration to the hegemonic center emerges as a plausible option for the subordinate population. The process of external penetration and internal imbalancing of labor-exporting areas has taken very different forms, however, during the history of capitalism.

Conquest and the slave trade involved the partial penetration of outlying areas to the expanding capitalist world economy and resulted in coerced labor flows from them. This form of displacement required relatively large, high risk capital investment and active support by the colonizing power so that the labor of slave-releasing areas should be available to mines and plantations located elsewhere under the same colonial domain (*See,* Portes and Walton, 1981:Ch. 2).

Migrant recruitment through economic inducements can be seen as the midpoint of an historical process that ranged from coerced labor extraction, as above, to the spontaneous initiation of flows on the basis of labor demand in the wealthier countries. The nineteenth to mid-twentieth century labor recruitment practices of the post-colonial nations of the Americas — from the United States to Argentina — were again costly in terms of capital input, but required only passive support from the coercive bodies of the receiving states. Deliberate recruitment through economic inducements has also been a common practice throughout the twentieth century with the goal of provoking labor displacements from nearby peripheries, for example from the relatively less developed countries of the Caribbean or the Mediterranean basin (Portes and Walton, 1981; Piore, 1979).

Self-initiated or spontaneous labor flows are more recent phenomena. They arise out of a change taking place in peripheral societies' consumption patterns which reflect more and more those being diffused from the advanced centers. The fulfillment of such expectations becomes increasingly difficult under the economies of scarcity of the periphery and growing cross-national ties make it possible for certain groups located there to seek

a solution by migrating abroad. Thus, external penetration in its successive forms — from physical coercion to economic inducement to cultural diffusion — has been a precondition for the initiation of international labor flows under capitalism (Portes, 1979).

Migration from former colonies and the *Gastarbeiter* system have been the two major forms of labor migration to Western Europe during the post-World War II period. Both of them support, in their own specific ways, the thesis that such flows do not arise out of backwardness *per se*. Recent immigration to Britain, the Netherlands and France has involved largescale movements of population from the respective colonies and former colonies of each. Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians have immigrated to France in large numbers while virtually ignoring the "comparative advantages" of other Western European countries. A similar case is that of nationals of African, Asian, and Caribbean members of the British Commonwealth or of those from the Netherlands' former colonies. In each instance, labor outflows have been directed to the former colonial power.

Although special entry privileges may have been granted to immigrants from former colonies, this fact does not suffice by itself to explain the single-minded concentration of such flows. Entry and resettlement facilities are seen, more appropriately, as part of the broader system tying colonial powers with the peripheral dependent societies which they molded. Thus, former colonials have consistently outweighed immigrants from equally poor countries outside the respective core power sphere of influence. For instance, Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians together constituted 34.4 percent of France's foreign born population in 1981, while all those born in the other, not much wealthier countries of the southern Mediterranean littoral or elsewhere in Africa numbered about 5.5 percent (Castles *et al.*, 1984: Table 3.3).

The Gastarbeiter system was based, on the other hand, on a conscious recruiting effort by receiving nation-states. According to Rist (1979: 412), 500 to 600 West German labor recruitment agencies operated in the Mediterranean Basin during the late 1960s. It appears that the FRG's recruitment effort served as a means to make up for relative disadvantage resulting from her lack of former colonies and the consequent unavailability of self-initiated colonial labor outflows. This difference may explain why the FRG, a large country without an established colonial past, came to be the European state most involved in the Gastarbeiter type of labor immigration in the period of its industrial reconstruction (Rist, 1979).

Turning to the Americas, the origin of Puerto Rican immigration to the United States offers another illustration of the significance of prior penetration and imbalancing. The island was occupied by the United States in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. North American influence, which

led to a profound transformation of this mostly rural society, began shortly after the military occupation when U.S. capital started pouring into new sugar cane plantations and mill construction (Moore and Pachon, 1985; Bonilla and Campos, 1981). In 1917, the Jones Act gave the islanders U.S. citizenship along with the obligation of serving in the American armed forces. Following a first recruitment effort by representatives of U.S. employers, Puerto Rican labor was contracted to work on cane plantations in Hawaii and on cotton fields in Arizona. Despite the absence of legal restrictions on immigration and the rapid economic transformation of the island, migration to the mainland began slowly. In 1920, the number of Puerto Ricans in the United States was estimated to be only 12,000; twenty-five years later, there were still less than 100,000 (Moore and Pachon, 1985; Maldonado, 1979).

World War II saw a second wave of economically induced migration from Puerto Rico to the United States, this time with federal government involvement in the recruitment process under the auspices of the War Manpower Commission. According to Maldonado (1979), the effort focused at first on skilled labor to be used as replacements in wartime factories. As little as seven months later, however, skilled immigration gave way to new flows of unskilled manual workers recruited and directed to specific mainland locations by federal agencies.

The fact that Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens had ambiguous effects on their immigration experience during this period. As citizens, Puerto Rican migrants were not deportable. Fears in this regard mounted to something of a political issue as early as 1943, when the replacement of Puerto Rican labor with Barbadian, Mexican, Bahamian and Jamaican workers was contemplated. New legislation was actually enacted in 1945, banning the appropriation of public monies for "the importation of citizens". As a result of this measure, "the importation of Puerto Ricans was discontinued and the branch office of the United States Employment Service in San Juan turned its attention to the service of the veterans" (Maldonado, 1979:112).

Private recruitment efforts continued after the federal government's exit from the process. The inflow of Puerto Ricans to the United States accelerated after World War II due to two additional causes. First, unemployment in the island became acute at a time when modern consumption expectations, diffused from the mainland, were being embraced by growing segments of the urban population (Sanchez-Korrol, 1983; Fitzpatrick, 1971). This form of externally induced cultural imbalancing led to the onset of the first waves of spontaneous migration. Second, the process was encouraged by elimination of the barrier of a long and costly sea journey with the advent of inexpensive air travel.

Puerto Rican men became employed as unskilled factory operatives and

as menial help in hotels and restaurants, while Puerto Rican women worked as domestics or as seamstresses in the garment industry. Initial waves of Puerto Rican labor migrants consisted primarily of urban dwellers with some occupational qualifications. Migrants originating in the countryside only began to outweigh their urban counterparts around 1950 (Fitzpatrick, 1971; Maldonado, 1979). As in other instances, the poorest rural segment of the sending population did not initiate the outflow, but joined it much later after recruitment patterns had become well established and the cycle of migration had become familiar in the island. As elsewhere, the "push" factors associated with sheer poverty proved a poor predictor of the timing of migration or the groups involved in it.

The consolidation of Puerto Rican ethnic communities in the United States thus represents the endpoint of a process that began with the acquisition and colonization of the island. The migrations which gave rise to today's ethnic minority in the United States did not arise spontaneously, but had their origins in political decisions and economic initiatives of the dominant nation-state. To this date, Puerto Rican communities are found right at the points where turn of the century recruiters had disembarked the migrants— places as disparate as steel towns in Ohio, ranches in California and plantation villages in Hawaii.

The various historical forms of penetration reviewed above — physical coercion, economic inducement and gradual transformation of cultural patterns — form part of a progression guided by the initiatives of states at the center of the international economy and the changing interests of its dominant classes. The outcome of this progression has been to increase consistently the supply of pliable labor while decreasing its costs. The process has reached its culmination today when labor migrants assume the initiative and the full costs of the journey. This outcome is what economists now refer to as "inexhaustible supplies" of labor.

From the point of view of the population of less developed countries, labor migration has emerged as a viable solution to their own societies' immediately perceptible internal imbalances, which causes are often well-hidden in historical relationships of domination. While in appearance migration arises out of a series of "rational" economic decisions by individuals to escape their immediate situation, in reality its fundamental origin lies in the history of past economic and political contact and power asymmetries between sending and receiving nations.

STABILITY

A second difficulty with standard push-pull theories is their inability to account for individual differences in patterns of migration. Given the same set of expelling forces and external inducements, why is it that some

individuals leave while others stay? Why, in particular, given the lopsided "differentials of advantage" in favor of the receiving society, do only a minority of the source populations migrate? Descriptions of Mexican, Dominican or West Indian migration — including those at an exclusively macrostructural level — suggest that "everyone is leaving", which is far from being the case (*See,* Lamm and Imhoff, 1986; Briggs, 1975).

A related shortcoming is the inability of conventional theories to explain the resilience of migrant flows once the original economic inducements have disappeared or have been significantly lessened. According to the underlying economic rationale of the push-pull approach, migration should reflect, with some lag, ups and downs in the "differential of advantage" which gives rise to the process in the first place. In reality, migration flows, once established, tend to continue with relative autonomy from such fluctuations.

Contrary to the assertion that international labor migration is basically an outcome of economic decisions governed by the law of supply and demand, we will argue that the phenomenon is primarily social in nature. Networks constructed by the movement and contact of people across space are at the core of the microstructures which sustain migration over time. More than individualistic calculations of gain, it is the insertion of people into such networks which helps explain differential proclivities to move and the enduring character of migrant flows.

Contemporary patterns of Mexican labor migration to the United States provide an illustration of this argument. Wage differentials between Mexico and the United States have been consistently poor predictors of the dynamics of the inflow. As in the case of Puerto Rico, macrostructural origins of Mexican migration must be sought in a history of military conquest, economic penetration and internal imbalancing of this country by its more powerful neighbor. Yet this fact, by itself, does not suffice to explain the differential propensities of Mexican communities to export migrants nor the stability of the process over time.

A recent study of four Mexican communities found that a major predictor of the probability of labor migration was prior migrant experience by the individual and his or her kin (Massey, 1987). Families apparently pass on their knowledge of the different aspects of the process and its expected rewards to younger generations. This mechanism helps explain the self-sustaining character of the flow as well as its selectivity of destinations. Several studies have documented the tendency of Mexican immigrants to go to certain places in the United States and not to others. Ties between specific sites of origin and destination are not exclusively economic, but also social as they depend on the continuing existence of supportive networks (Cornelius, 1977; Alba, 1978).

Bustamante and Martinez (1979) conclude their study of Mexican

migrant workers in the United States by noting that the vast majority remain only for a limited period of time, between two and six months on the average. The process can be characterized as a cyclical pattern in which a greater number of past trips by self and kin increases the probability of new departures. Thus, as the social phenomenon of migration unfolds "the factors that originally spurred it become less relevant" (Massey, 1987:89). Contacts across space, "family chains" and the new information and interests which they promote become at least as important as calculations of economic gain in sustaining the cyclical movement.

Studies of newcomers on the United States side of the border support the same conclusions. Most recent arrivals from Mexico — including the undocumented — are reported to find jobs within a few days thanks to the assistance of family and kin. The same social networks serve as financial safety nets and as sources of cultural and political information (Browning and Rodriguez, 1985). These microstructures of migration not only permit the survival of recent arrivals, but constitute a significant undercurrent often running counter to broader economic trends. Through these arrangements, variations in wages and employment opportunities are evened out so that, over time, the size and destinations of the migrant flow become relatively insensitive to fluctuations in the economic cycle.

Regulations regarding Gastarbeiter migration in Western Europe were also based on the push-pull rationale provided by standard economic theory. Under conditions of economic recession, it was expected that such flows would decline or even reverse themselves spontaneously. Notwithstanding the concerted action of West European governments to encourage this outcome in the aftermath of the mid-1970s oil crisis, expectations about the dynamics of the Gastarbeiter system proved utterly wrong. Instead of the anticipated cyclical or "rotating" pattern of labor migration in response to external economic incentives, governments confronted the decided resistance of migrant communities to be manipulated against their own internal logic.

The failure of governmental efforts to countermand what they had themselves set into action has been widely recognized (Castles, 1986). Less attention has been paid, however, to the theoretical assumptions which underlay the policy failures in the first place. Thus the "laws of the market" continue to hold sway in the migration literature despite their having been resoundingly defeated by humble workers who, because of their vulnerability, would seem most subject to them.

An important aspect of labor migration is the fact that the social channels which it creates open ways for entry and settlement of individuals who do not directly participate in the labor process. These dependent family members may enter the labor market subsequently. Opportunities may emerge,

for example, for wives and for migrant children as they become of age. Occupationally inactive migrants continue to increase, however, the dependency ratios of foreign working class communities. In West Germany, even though entries of laborers from outside the EEC were banned in 1973, the numbers of foreign residents continued to grow due to family reunification. The latter has become the major legal entry category for foreign nationals (Castles, 1986). The average length of stay has also increased significantly and the composition of migrant communities has begun to approximate — except for the invariant absence of the elderly — that of their home societies. The consolidation of migrant networks across space and the emergence of ethnic communities in West Germany signal once again the failure of policies based on simple assumptions about individualistic economic behavior.

More than movement from one place to another in search of higher wages, labor migration should be conceptualized as a process of progressive network building. Networks connect individuals and groups distributed across different places, maximizing their economic opportunities through multiple displacements. Labor migration is thus a device through which individual workers and their households adapt to opportunities distributed unevenly in space. Hence, migration performs a dual function: for capital, it is a source of more abundant and less expensive labor; for the migrants, it is a means of survival and a vehicle for social integration and economic mobility.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Thus far, the discussion has focused on one particular group of immigrants, namely manual workers participating in the lower tier of the receiving labor markets. This simplification was necessary in order to outline arguments regarding the origins and stability of labor flows. International migration today, however, is a more multifaceted phenomena. This and the following section examine types of settlement patterns and their various manifestations in the United States and Western Europe.

Until recently, most scholarship devoted to the study of immigrant settlement patterns relied on the theoretical imagery of assimilation. This view posited a basically unilinear process of immigrant adaptation to the host society. Assimilation theory is a derivation of the more general functionalist paradigm in sociology, applied to the topic of foreign minorities. The sequence leading to assimilation is said to be marked by the initial "social disequilibrium" created by a clash of conflicting cultural values and norms. The resolution of this tension depends on the cultural and social absorption of newcomers into the mainstream. The velocity of absorption varies, in turn, with such factors as language, religion and race of im-

migrants, but the steps to be taken are essentially the same and, once initiated, are irreversible (Portes and Bach, 1985: Ch. 1).

Having depicted the re-establishment of societal consensus after the disruption caused by immigration as a universal process, the sole remaining task for the assimilationist school was to map and illustrate the various steps of the process. Absorption into the mainstream was seen as progressing through the stages of acculturation, structural assimilation, amalgamation and identificational assimilation. Although authors like Gordon (1964), Warner and Srole (1945), and Handlin (1951) identified exceptions and blockages of one or more of these stages, the image of an irreversible linear process remained the central theoretical insight of this approach.

The assimilationist viewpoint was based primarily on the experiences of turn of the century East Central European and Mediterranean immigrants to the United States. It was theory written from the mainstream which generalized the experiences of certain immigrants who remained in the United States and underwent some or all of the above stages of sociocultural change. Critics noted that the theory failed to account for the experience of "unassimilable" minorities, such as many nonwhite groups, and also failed to consider return flows. The resilience of ethnic identity in the United States, even among communities established by turn of the century immigration, also indicated that patterns of adaptation can follow a dynamic at variance with the gradual extinction of cultural differences posited by assimilationism (Greeley, 1971).

In our view, the most fundamental shortcoming of this perspective was, however, that the tunnel vision of a singular assimilation sequence precluded giving due attention to the diversity of paths followed by immigrant minorities, particularly those arriving in the post-World War II period. Results of recent empirical research have led to the gradual abandonment of assimilation theory and have begun to substitute for it a more nuanced approach. Although different ways of illustrating current diversity are possible, the following sections will focus on only three basic dimensions: the conditions of exit, the class origin of immigrants and the contexts of reception.

Conditions of Exit

The first significant point of cleavage concerns the specific political conditions under which a particular immigrant group leaves its country of origin. The key distinction here involves political escapees as opposed to wage labor migrants. The condition of the latter has been theorized extensively in the immigration literature and constitutes the point of reference for the preceding sections. Massive refugee flows, on the other hand, have gained attention only in recent years. As Zolberg and his associates (1986) have noted, refugee

flows are the outcomes of struggles over the formation of modern states, as in certain Third World societies; transformations of the form of the state, as in socialist revolutions or other transitions to state socialism; and struggles for authoritarian control over the state, as in Europe of the 1920s and 1930s or in contemporary dictatorships of the right.

Refugee flows are prompted by the resulting "generalized violence" against the whole or a particular segment of the source society. Violence itself, however, does not suffice to explain the dynamics of such flows because the status of refugee is a legal category granted by receiving states on the basis of a broad set of considerations, of which the degree of generalized violence in the sending country is only one. Refugee policies constitute an integral part of the geopolitical strategies of many countries of destination (Bach, *et al.*, 1981). Depending on the latter, politically motivated outflows may be prevented, permitted or even actively encouraged. According to Zolberg *et al.* (1986:154):

> "The availability of a place of refuge may in some cases determine whether persecution will lead to the formation of a refugee flow or some other outcome".

Political conditions of exit have a significant bearing on subsequent patterns of settlement. Unlike other immigrants, those recognized as refugees by host governments often receive major resettlement assistance. Official aid does not necessarily guarantee successful economic adaptation, as it can lead to longterm dependence on governmental agencies. However, its availability represents an important component of the early adaptation experience of refugees absent from those of most other immigrants. In addition, the granting and acceptance of the status of refugee often precludes the option of return, as is the case with many escapees from state socialist regimes as well as from dictatorships of the right. The blockage of the return option — for extensive periods or even for life — constitutes a fundamental difference with other forms of immigration, affecting refugees' attitudes toward the host society and their patterns of adaptation.

Class Origins

Former rural and urban workers have represented the bulk of immigration, both legal and undocumented, in recent years. They may gain entry through legal channels, for example as family members or as contract laborers, or evade law enforcement either by illegally crossing borders or by overstaying temporary visas. The main assets that this class of immigrants brings to their countries of destination are all labor related: skills, willingness to work harder and for lower wages than the local working class, and flexibility to accommodate fluctuations in employers' needs (Portes and Bach, 1985: Ch. 7). The massive presence of these manual labor immigrants in the advanced

countries can only be explained by the match between their goals and aspirations and the interests of their employers. Mexican immigration to the United States, Turkish immigration to West Germany and most Caribbean immigration to Great Britain are examples of this class origin and of the economic contributions such immigrants can make. Their settlement patterns vary, however, with the context of reception as will be seen below.

A lesser number of immigrants come from the professional-managerial class of their respective countries. Unlike manual laborers, the bulk of this second class of immigrants comes legally and for permanent residence. Labeled "brain drain" in the countries of origin, these professional immigrants often represent a significant gain of highly trained personnel for countries of destination. The third preference category of the permanent residence visa allocation system of the United States is reserved for "members of the professions of exceptional ability and merit". This category has provided one of the main entry channels for this class of immigrants. In 1986, for example, 63,376 persons classified as professionals and managers arrived as permanent residents in the United States with the main contributors being the Philippines, India, the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China (U.S. Immigration Service, 1987).

Professionals who earn enough at home to sustain a middle class standard of living and who are reasonably satisfied about their chances for advancement seldom migrate. Those threatened with poverty or early career obsolescence start looking for opportunities abroad. Fertile grounds for this type of migration are countries in which university students are trained in advanced Western-style career practices, but then find no means to implement their training because of lack of jobs or modern equipment (Portes, 1976).

Entrepreneurs form a third characteristic class of immigrants. Until recently, immigration laws of the advanced countries seldom encouraged explicitly this type of inflow, but it has taken place nevertheless in increasing numbers. Industrialists and merchants may be part of early refugee outflows; small entrepreneurs may also gain entry by joining labor streams or making use of professional credentials. Once arrived, large and small business people generally attempt to recreate their class position (Light, 1972; Bonacich and Modell, 1980). Success in these ventures depends on their expertise and capital resources, as well as on conditions in the context of reception, as seen below.

Immigrants of different class origins may be part of both regular "economic" or political refugee movements. For instance, struggles over the formation of modern states and revolutionary transitions to socialism tend to displace previous ruling elites, including former entrepreneurs and high level bureaucrats. On the other hand, struggles involving authoritarian

states of the right often lead to the escape of middle class professionals and members of the subordinate classes, such as peasants and minority workers (Zolberg, *et al.,* 1986; Pedraza-Bailey, 1985).

Emigration from Hungary since World War II offers a notable example of the changing class origin of politically motivated outflows. During the war and under a pro-Nazi government, the two major groups of political refugees were Jews — escaping physical danger — and radical left-wing intellectuals — emigrating primarily to the Soviet Union. With the end of the war and the Soviet occupation, most members of the aristocracy and the high bourgeoisie, along with top civilian and military members of the *ancien régime,* left for the West. During subsequent years, most remaining members of the disowned Hungarian bourgeoisie quit the country — primarily for the United States — along with white collar Jews heading for Israel, some professionals leaving rapidly deteriorating work conditions, ethnic Slovak peasants and a group of *ungarndeutsch* peasants — ethnic German citizens of Hungary — who were forcibly expatriated to Germany as collective punishment for their role during the war. Following the 1956 uprising, a large group of new political asylees, mostly young, and highly trained professionals left Hungary and settled in virtually all advanced Western countries (Böröcz, 1987).

Contexts of Reception

A third dimension along which contemporary immigrant flows vary is reception in the host society. Although it is possible and useful for analytical purposes to separate the economic, political, legal and other aspects of contexts of reception, in reality these conditions tend to form more or less coherent patterns organizing the life chances of newcomers. The stance of host governments (as in Böhning, 1984: 29-60), employers, the surrounding native population and the characteristics of the pre-existing ethnic community, if any, are important aspects of the situation confronting new immigrants. Newcomers face these realities as a *fait accompli* which alters their aspirations and plans and can channel individuals of similar backgrounds into widely different directions. There are a multiplicity of possible contexts of reception but, for the sake of simplicity, we will consider only three ideal-typical illustrations.

A first such instance is marked by low receptivity on the part of the host society. The governmental apparatus takes a dim view of the inflow and attempts to reduce or suppress it altogether. Immigrants are negatively typified by employers, either as unsuitable labor or as suitable only for menial jobs, a condition compounded by generalized prejudice among the native population. Immigration into such handicapped contexts tends to be surreptitious and temporary. Newcomers still come because of the

availability of some economic opportunities under the sponsorship of kinship networks. Their own community is also mired in poverty, however, so that it seldom provides the resources — capital and markets — to sustain independent entrepreneurship. Under such negative conditions, patterns of settlement are precarious at best and opportunities for economic mobility remain permanently blocked.

A second polar situation is one where immigration is permitted, but not actively encouraged, and where no strong stereotypes exist about the characteristics of immigrants. In such ideally neutral contexts, the process of adaptation approximates that assumed by individualistic models of occupational and economic attainment. In other words, immigrants are able to freely compete with the native born on the basis of personal educational achievements and skills. Perfectly impartial contexts seldom exist in reality, but they are approximated in the United States by white immigrants with some occupational skills who settle away from areas of ethnic concentration.

The last ideal pole is that of foreign groups who receive active legal as well as material assistance from the host governments and meet with a favorable public reception. New arrivals into such advantaged contexts have exceptionally good opportunities to capitalize on their background skills and experience so that their returns may even exceed those received by the native born. In these exceptional instances, membership in the ethnic community can be an asset rather than a liability. Government support for earlier arrivals facilitates their entry into advantageous positions from which they can help later migrants. Established immigrant professionals may, for example, "show the ropes" to those coming after them, while immigrant entrepreneurs may provide recent arrivals with a period of business apprenticeship (Portes and Stepick, 1985; Stepick, in press).

Political refugees in the United States and other advanced countries — once recognized as legitimate and awarded the appropriate legal status — have often approximated these ideal circumstances. Privileged reception has also greeted members of ethnic diasporas who join nation-states formed by their co-nationals, as is the case with Russian Jews emigrating to Israel or ethnic Germans coming to West Germany from the non-German states of Eastern Europe. The recent inflow of mostly ethnic Magyar citizens of Romania to Hungary represents a case whereby warm acceptance by the receiving society is coupled with a policy change toward tolerance on the part of the receiving state. The outcome so far has been the quick absorption of the immigrants into Hungarian society, made difficult only by the tenuousness of their legal status.

The combination of factors giving rise to the above ideal- typical instances may also fall into different patterns leading to other contexts of reception. Governments favorably inclined to a particular inflow may run afoul of their

native constituencies; employer discrimination may be checked by vigorous ethnic entrepreneurship; and refugees welcomed with open arms may fall into a welfare trap in the absence of autonomous economic networks. Together, governmental policy, public opinion, labor market demand and pre-existing ethnic communities interact in a variable geometry which can channel newcomers of similar endowments into very different paths.

A TYPOLOGY OF MODES OF INCORPORATION

The diversity of contemporary immigration to the advanced countries contrasts with widely held images of a uniform working class origin and of a singular assimilation path. In particular, the combination of different class origins and contexts of reception gives rise to a plurality of settlement patterns, as illustrated in Figure 1. This typology represents a simplification of an already cursory description of the range of possible outcomes. Its

FIGURE 1
A TYPOLOGY OF MODES OF INCORPORATION OF CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRANTS TO THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES

CONTEXT OF RECEPTION	CLASS OF ORIGIN		
	Manual Labor	**Professional-Technical**	**Entrepreneurial**
HANDICAPPED	Secondary Market Incorporation	Ghetto Service Providers	Middleman Minorities
NEUTRAL	Mixed Labor Market Participation	Primary Market Incorporation	Mainstream Small Business
ADVANTAGED	Upward Mobility to Small Entrepreneurship	Upward Mobility to Positions of Professional and Civic Leadership	Enclave Economies

purpose is exclusively heuristic, namely to illustrate some of the principal modes of incorporation characterizing individual immigrants or even entire collectivities at present. Neither the range of values of the defining dimensions nor entries in the cells are intended as an exhaustive description of reality. Instead, the conceptual space thus created serves to locate some of the principal situations identified by the research literature in relation to each other.

The upper left cell of Figure 1 depicts the common situation which has given rise to most stereotypes about contemporary immigration. Manual labor migrants arriving in contexts in which their kind are unwelcomed or discriminated against tend to be channeled toward the lower tier of the receiving labor market. Characteristics of this secondary sector have been the subject of some controversy, but there is growing consensus among scholars that it is defined by jobs which require little or no prior training, which cluster at the low end of the wage scale, which offer little or no mobility opportunities, and which are subject to rapid employee turnover (Gordon, 1972; Tolbert *et al.*, 1980; Wilson and Portes, 1980).

Workers in this sector are often hired according to racial, ethnic or gender markers indicative of their labor market vulnerability, rather than according to their skills. In particular, immigrants in a tenuous legal status are frequently preferred for such jobs. Although there is internal differentiation within all immigrant nationalities, the condition of Mexican and Dominican immigrants in the United States generally exemplify this mode of incorporation. These flows contain substantial proportions of manual workers and surreptitious immigrants and are subject to much prejudice in places of destination. In the U.S. Southwest, for example, Mexican immigrants have been consistently typified as a source of menial, low wage labor. This condition, added to the disadvantaged character of working class Mexican American communities, helps explain why Mexicans tend to receive significantly lower earnings than other workers with similar human capital endowments (Reimers, 1985; Nelson and Tienda, 1985).

Clearly and unambiguously secondary sector immigration appears to be less prevalent in Western Europe than in the United States. One possible reason may be a difference in the intensity of the sociogeographical definition and enforcement of state borders. Throughout its history, the vast land borders of the United States have been more "porous" for entry than those of Europe. To the extent that the borders of contemporary Europe are better enforced, secondary sector immigration tends to include primarily those illegally extending "temporary visitor" visas and other entry documents.

Highly skilled immigrants can also find themselves in handicapped contexts, as when they come surreptitiously, are denied political asylum, or are subject to heavy discrimination because of racial characteristics. An un-

favorable official reception makes it difficult for foreign professionals to revalidate titles or obtain licenses, reducing them to ply their trades illegally. Even with legal licenses, discrimination often forces them to limit their practices to their own ethnic community or to other downtrodden minorities. Clandestine Jamaican and Dominican doctors and dentists in New York, Latin immigration lawyers in California, West Indian medical graduates in Great Britain, Turkish translators and notaries in the FRG, foreign clergy, teachers and social workers in low status communities perform crucial intellectual functions for the surrounding population (for a theoretical orientation to the case of minority professionals, *See,* Geschwender, 1978; for specific examples, *See,* Bray, 1984; Stevens, *et al.,* 1978; Cardona, 1980). While the attachment of some immigrant professionals to impoverished ethnic communities may be voluntary, most would not be found in this situation were it not because an unfavorable reception blocks their chances for outside employment.

A similar condition affects business oriented immigrants coming under unfavorable circumstances. When dominant groups in the host society take a dim view of the arrival and activities of these immigrants, their role is often reduced to that of ghetto merchants. Bonacich and her associates have described the functions that such "middleman minorities" play as providers of business services in high risk areas and as buffers absorbing the frustration of the downtrodden.

The Jews of medieval Europe, the Chinese in Southeast Asia and the Indians in West Africa are cited by these authors as classic examples of the middleman role (Bonacich, 1973; Bonacich and Modell, 1980). In American inner cities, Jewish and Italian merchants played this role for decades, although they have been progressively replaced by Orientals in recent years. Pakistani and Indian shopkeepers have been described as performing similar functions in low income urban areas of Britain (Bonacich *et al.,* 1977; Kim, 1981; Werbner, 1987; Zimmer and Aldrich, 1987). In all these instances, lack of capital resources combines with outside discrimination to channel would-be entrepreneurs into middleman roles. Immigrants accept the risks entailed by such ventures in exchange for the opportunity to share in the financial benefits of high retail prices and usury in lower class neighborhoods.

Immigrants entering neutral contexts of reception face a situation where individual merit and skills are the most important determinants of successful adaptation. In these instances, manual workers may be found in either primary or secondary sector jobs and foreign professionals may enter directly into the mainstream of their respective careers. The establishment of contiguous free circulation areas such as the Nordic Labor Market and the EEC labor pool provide examples of generally neutral contexts of

reception. This aspect of West European integration results in mixed modes of labor market participation for Finnish workers in Sweden and of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Greek workers in the FRG, France, Britain and the Benelux countries (Salt, 1983; Castles *et al.*, 1984).

Gastarbeiter-flows of non-EEC citizens in Western Europe spread over the handicapped and the neutral types. At first, governmental and legal conditions were clearly "neutral" within the limits of the recruited contract labor arrangement. Notwithstanding lingering racial and ethnic prejudices in the receiving societies, these guestworkers were offered employment at various (mostly bottom) positions of the primary as well as the secondary sectors of the receiving economies. Those entering into the primary market posed a difficult policy dilemma for the traditionally powerful native trade unions (Schmitter-Heisler, 1985). The guestworkers' mixed labor market participation —or, more precisely their ability to partially penetrate certain protected positions of the primary sector — may explain why the question of their political rights has come to the fore in national politics in the host countries (Hammar, 1985; Moulier-Boutang, 1985; Tung, 1985).

The official ban on new entries during the mid-seventies did not noticeably alter the labor market participation of those guestworkers who stayed. Although the legal context has turned markedly more hostile for non-EEC guestworkers, the difference manifests itself primarily in the EEC citizens' greater freedom to shift between jobs for better pay. As a result of the reversal of the "foreigner-policies" of the receiving states, strictly defined guestworkers "are no longer with us; either they have gone or they have been transmogrified into settlers and marginalized into ethnic minorities" (Castles *et al.*, 1986: 775).

The circulation of professionals within the EEC and the situation of British, Canadian and other white foreign professionals in the United States provide examples of a neutral context for highly skilled immigrants. In each case, a relatively open labor market combines with the occupational qualifications of newcomers to facilitate incorporation into the primary sector. Although immigrants may enter at the bottom of their respective career ladders, opportunities for upward mobility are not limited or blocked as in handicapped contexts. As studies of foreign physicians and scientists in the United States have shown, the outcome is the eventual presence of immigrants at all levels of their respective career ladders (Stevens *et al.*, 1978).

Working class immigrants seldom meet privileged contexts of reception. Those who do tend to be part of officially sanctioned refugee or other advantaged flows which also contain large proportions of upper class immigrants. Facing favorable circumstances, the latter are able to implement a set of business activities which can pull less privileged members of the

community into desirable positions within the ethnic economy. Professional immigrants arriving into these situations also find that they can not only compete freely, but that the strength of ethnic networks can catapult them, in a relatively short time, into positions of civic and political leadership.

Cuban refugees, concentrated in South Florida, represent one of the best documented instances of an advantaged context of reception. The early waves of this exodus were formed by white professionals and business people who benefited from a favorable reception by the U.S. government and a generally positive image in American public opinion. Although the early years of this "golden exile" were spent in attempts to recapture power in Cuba, the defeat at the Bay of Pigs and subsequent events compelled many Cubans to turn attention to conditions in their new environment The combination of professional-entrepreneurial backgrounds with a favorable context led to the emergence, in the course of a few years, of a thriving ethnic economy.[2]

For Cuban immigrants of lower socioeconomic origins, the development of that economy meant enhanced opportunities for employment and small entrepreneurship. A longitudinal study of participants in the 1980 Mariel exodus from Cuba found that, among this predominantly working class inflow, close to half of the gainfully employed after six years worked in Cuban owned enterprises, including thirteen percent who had become self-employed. Earnings among the latter were significantly greater than among wage earners, whether employed in or out of the Cuban enclave (Portes and Clark, 1987). These findings are in line with those from the 1980 Census which also indicate positive effects of self-employment on immigrants' economic attainment. According to census figures, average 1979 earnings of self-employed Cuban males in the Miami metropolitan area were $20,959, or $5,000 more than the figure for the entire working male population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983).

For professionals, a favorable context offers opportunities to reach positions of local prominence within their respective careers. The Cuban exile community of Miami thus features an interesting reversal of the time-honored pattern in which educated offspring of immigrants abandon the ethnic area for mainstream jobs and residences. On the contrary, many second generation Cuban professionals, educated in northern universities, return to Miami to practice their careers. Family ties play a role in this process, but the most important reasons are the opportunities made avail-

[2] Cuban enterprises in the Miami area increased from less than a thousand in the mid-1960s to over 25,000 today. Unlike middleman shops which tend to be small and to concentrate in commerce, enclave enterprises are found in most sectors of economic activity, and range from very small to fairly sizable firms, including banks, import-export houses and construction firms. At present, half of the ten largest Hispanic-owned firms in the United States and half of the ten largest banks are in Miami, although the area contains only 5% of the country's Spanish origin population.

able by ethnic networks. As a prominent example, the current mayor of Miami is a Harvard trained lawyer who had to "relearn" Spanish before entering local politics. Lawyers, engineers, physicians and college teachers have followed a similar route (Botifoll, 1985).

Other favorable contexts of reception have been documented by Ivan Light (1984) and P.G. Min (1988) among Koreans in Los Angeles and by Peter Doeringer *et al.* (1986) among Portuguese fishermen in New England. These notable instances have begun to give rise to statements in the North American media about the "spirit of enterprise" of immigrants and their unusual achievements. Such generalizations are not warranted. Instead, these experiences must be seen as consequences of unique circumstances and must be contrasted with the unfavorable or, at best, neutral contexts greeting most new arrivals. Overall, the only justifiable generalization is the diversity in modes of incorporation of contemporary immigration to the advanced countries and the widely different economic and social outcomes to which they give rise.

CONCLUSION: IMMIGRATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Orthodox theoretical perspectives reviewed in this article — push-pull and supply-demand theories about the origins of migrant flows and assimilationist theories about the process of adaptation — have two characteristics in common. First, they are based on an image of the world divided by national boundaries and of immigration as an event which takes place between such self-contained political entities. Second, they tend to impute to sending areas attributes which are the obverse of those found at home. Thus, to the "pull" of higher wages there must correspond widespread poverty in areas where immigrants originate, and to the demand for immigrant labor there must correspond an undifferentiated supply of job- hungry applicants. Similarly, the process of assimilation must have as its counterpart the absence of options in places of origin.

If push-pull theories of the causes of migration were to be taken seriously, the most vigorous outflows to the advanced West should originate in equatorial Africa and similarly impoverished countries; within such countries, migration should come from the poorest regions. Similarly, if we were to take supply-demand models at face value, migration should follow, with some lag, the economic cycle declining or stopping altogether during downturns. Finally, if we were to believe the tenets of assimilationism, all immigrants would queue dutifully at the doors of the host society awaiting their turn for social acceptance as a reward for their acculturation. These and other generalizations, stemming from the same theoretical quarters, have been shown to be consistently wrong by empirical research.

The alternative explanations proposed above stem from a different theoretical perspective. Immigration, like other international processes, does not so much take place between compartmentalized national units as within an overarching system, itself a product of past historical development. Nation-states play an important, but not exclusive role within this system which also includes the activities of a multiplicity of private actors from large corporations to working class households. The activities of these unofficial actors across national borders are the reason for the limited effectiveness of official efforts to regulate immigration. State policies designed to control such movements are often modified or derailed by the countervailing actions of other participants in the process.

In our view, a perspective on immigration as a process internal to the global system offers a more superior point of departure than the traditional view of the movement as something taking place between separate nation-states, and to be evaluated exclusively in terms of its domestic impact. The frontier for theory and research in this field has moved beyond an exclusive concern with immigrant adaptation to focus on relationships between immigration and other international processes. Movements of capital, technology, institutional forms and cultural innovations — like displacements of workers and refugees — criss-cross the world and interact with each other. Understanding such movements as well as other complexities of the international political economy represents the main challenge for the field of migration studies today. The modes that such events impinge on people of different national and class origins holds the key for advancing toward a more compelling formulation of present migration trends and their likely directions in the future.

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