

## 49

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF MIGRATION

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Migration is an old story. For thousands of years, people have migrated to search for food, survive, conquer frontiers, colonize new territories, escape from war zones or political turmoil, and look for new and more rewarding and exciting opportunities. Originating from Africa, the modern *Homo sapiens* arrived in Eurasia at least 40,000 years ago and in North and South America more than 20,000 years ago (Davis 1974; Diamond 1997; Hirschman 2005). In a broad sense, the history of the world is a history of human migration and settlement. As a country of immigrants, the United States is perhaps the best example in this regard. Sociologists have long been interested in theorizing about different types of societies—from Ferdinand Tönnies’s dichotomy of “community” and “society” to Émile Durkheim’s “mechanic solidarity” and “organic solidarity.” The former, being the more traditional society, is characterized by more intimate relations among members—that is, people in the group know each other well. Decisions in these communities were often made by village or clan leaders rather than collectively. In contrast, in modern societies, it is impossible to know all the people in the community, and decisions concerning the welfare of community members are more likely to be made jointly in one way or another. The typology of the founding fathers of sociology clearly captures the major trends of social change and transformation over time; what was not made explicit was that underlying this transition from a traditional to a modern society, there is also a story of migration. As cities become centers of economic activities, there is also an increase in rural to

urban migration. Urban communities are commonly much larger than villages, and anonymity is a major feature of urban society. Likewise, migration is also dealt with in some of Karl Marx’s writings. For example, Marx wrote, “In the sphere of agriculture, modern industry has a more revolutionary effect than elsewhere, for this reason, it annihilates the peasant, that bulwark of the old society, and replaces him by the wage-labourer” (quoted in Tucker 1978:416). More often than not, the wage laborers in England that Marx was referring to then were migrants from rural areas.

The main purpose of this chapter is to review sociological studies of migration and highlight some of the most important contributions that sociologists have made to the field of migration studies. In doing so, we plan to cover international migration as well as internal migration. Given the vast scope of the literature on migration and the continuing expansion of the field, this review has to be highly selective. We end the chapter by discussing the future prospects of research on migration.

### MIGRATION AS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY FIELD OF STUDY

Migration attracted scholars from multiple disciplines from the very beginning. Given the large body of literature on migration contributed by scholars from different fields—economics, demography, anthropology, history, geography, and sociology—it is impossible to discuss all

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## 488 • LOCALITY AND SOCIAL LIFE

the major practitioners in the field. Therefore, instead of providing an exhaustive list of scholars in these disciplines who study migration, I will highlight the most important contributions by practitioners from two major disciplines (geography and economics) to the field of migration studies. In fact, one of the earliest scholarly papers on migration was written by a geographer, Ravenstein (1889) using census data from England, in which he outlined several laws of migration. Naturally, geographers are concerned with migration because migration inevitably involves crossing geographical boundaries and changes the spatial distribution of the population (within and across countries). Some of the most well-known and influential geographers who work on migration issues include Wilbur Zelinsky and Andrei Rogers. In an attempt to develop a parallel theory of migration similar to the theory of demographic transition, Zelinsky (1971) proposed the theory of mobility transition, in which he outlined five stages of mobility associated with different stages of development. One of the significant insights from Zelinsky's theory is that he recognized a relationship between technological changes and forms/types of migration/mobility. For example, as modes of transportation (i.e., high-speed trains and the popular use of automobiles) improve, people are more likely to engage in circular migration or commuting to cities from suburban areas.

Likewise, based on the idea of the model fertility schedule and on fundamental regularities of migration by age, Rogers and his colleagues developed a model migration schedule (Rogers and Willekens 1986). This approach begins with the observation that like fertility and mortality, migration is an age-dependent social behavior—that is, patterns of migration are closely related to age. To construct a model migration schedule, Rogers and colleagues identified three stages/components of migration associated with the individual life cycle: pre-labor force component, labor force component, and post-labor force component. There are two sets of parameters used to estimate such models: one associated with the profile of migration and the other associated with the level of migration. *Profile* describes how migration propensity varies by age and *level* depicts the magnitude of migration. The most important insight from this line of research is that, typically, countries share a strikingly similar profile of migration and differ only by level. In other words, the age pattern of migration is nearly universally similar (at least based on the data available to Rogers and his colleagues), and the difference in migration between countries lies only in the level of migration (some countries have higher levels of migration and others have low levels of migration).

More recently, the increasing application of geographical information system (GIS) in many fields (including migration) reflects the unique contribution of geographers, who have revolutionized our understanding of spatial patterns of migration and population distribution. Here, we discuss just three ways in which GIS helps researchers study migration behavior. First, GIS allows us to visualize

patterns of migration that can take several characteristics into account. Second, GIS technology can allow us to model explicitly how the spatial location of a community affects the prevalence of certain behaviors, such as migration or fertility, among individuals in the community (Weeks 2004). For example, Community A is already established as a migrant-sending community. If Community B (not a migrant-sending community) is located near Community A, we can model the extent to which this spatial linkage between Community A and Community B can influence the migration behavior of individuals in Community B. This analysis is often under the rubric of the analysis of diffusion patterns. Third, migrants (both internal and international) are often difficult to capture in national surveys. In the United States, for example, some of the immigrants are undocumented, and they usually try to avoid any contact with people from formal organizations. In China, most of the migrants are not registered at their destinations. Thus, a survey that uses registered population will miss a substantial number of migrants. Recently, Landry and Shen (2005) have used the spatial sampling technique to increase the coverage of China's migrant population. Their results suggest that the coverage of migrant populations has improved significantly.

Economists have also made important contributions to the field of migration studies. Larry Sjaastad (1969) established the foundation of the micro-economic theory of human migration, which has proved to be helpful to migration researchers. The central idea is that based on cost-benefits calculation, individuals choose to move to places where they can be most productive. In contrast, economists in the neoclassical macro-economic tradition would pay more attention to wage differentials between regions (countries) (Todaro 1976). The wage in turn is determined by supply of and demand for labor in each region. Another economist whose work has drawn attention recently is Oded Stark (1991), who, along with his associates, has popularized the so-called new economics of migration. There are at least two significant insights in Stark's work. One is the notion that migration decisions are not made by isolated individuals but rather by families or households. Second, unlike the neoclassical macro-economic theory of migration, which assumes that higher wage rates at migrant destinations (compared with migrant origins) drive migrant flows, the new economics of migration rejects this assumption and only assumes that economic conditions in the migrant-sending and -receiving regions are negatively or weakly associated (Massey et al. 1998). This departure from the narrow focus on wage differentials has important implications. For instance, within the framework of the new economics of migration, even if the wage gap between the United States and Mexico remains the same or is even reduced, international migration from Mexico to the United States can still continue if social and political changes in Mexico increase the degree of uncertainty or risks involved in living there.

In the field of international migration, among economists, George Borjas (1999) probably has done the most research on immigration issues. One of the most important findings of his work is his thesis of the “declining quality of immigrants”—that is, over time, there has been a significant decline in the relative education of immigrants entering the U.S. labor market. Further, this decline in the quality of immigrants coincides with change in the source countries of immigration, from Europe to Latin America and Asia. However, Borjas’s results are inconclusive. As Alba and Nee (2003) have pointed out, by using formal education as the yardstick of the quality of immigrants, Borjas probably understated the pace of assimilation of recent immigrants due to on-the-job learning and adult education. Borjas’s (1999) results are also confounded by the possibility of emigration of successful immigrants. Moreover, in a recent paper using cohorts, derived from administrative data, of people who had immigrated in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Jasso (2004) casts further doubt on the thesis of declining quality of immigrants. For example, Jasso (2004) found no evidence of declining quality of immigrants among female immigrants.

Having provided an overview of major contributions by scholars in other social science fields, we now turn to discussion of the relationship between migration studies and the development of American sociology and focus on contributions made by sociologists in migration studies.

## MIGRATION STUDIES AND AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

The University of Chicago was the first to have a sociology department in the United States, which was founded in 1892 (Bulmer 1984). The turn of the twentieth century was a significant time in the immigration history of the United States. This was a period when the country witnessed one of the largest immigrant flows, mainly characterized by immigration from Southern and Eastern European countries. Over the period from 1891 to 1930, nearly 23 million immigrants arrived in the United States. Most of the immigrants who came from Eastern and Southern European countries settled in major metropolitan areas. For example, in 1910, 70 percent of the population in the city of Chicago consisted of immigrants and their children (Steinberg 1989). One of the University of Chicago sociologists, W. I. Thomas, wrote that “immigration was a burning question . . . this was mainly the new immigration, from southern and eastern Europe. The larger groups were Poles, Italians, and Jews” (cited in Bulmer 1984:46). Given this statement, it was not surprising that W. I. Thomas went on to conduct a major project on the Polish immigrants. This project culminated in a landmark book with his Polish collaborator Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasants in Europe and America* (Thomas and Znaniecki 1984).

One of the innovations of the book was the use of life histories of immigrants so that scholars could study “changes of attitude over time.” Thomas and Znaniecki (1984) also used letters and diaries from immigrants. But perhaps the most profound impact the book had on the sociology of immigration was that it opened up a new research methodology: life history method in the study of immigrant life. When applied to a large and representative sample of immigrants, the technique is powerful in making statements and generalizations about the life of immigrants. For example, in the Mexican Migration Project, directed by Douglas S. Massey and Jorge Durand, systematic life history data were collected on migration history, marriage history, fertility history, and labor history (Massey et al. 1987). As a result, the project allowed researchers to explore a variety of topics related to the immigration process, such as migration networks, wages, gender consequences of migration, and the impact of immigration on source communities. The second main contribution of this book was the explicit attention to migrant-receiving as well as migrant-sending communities. This recognition led to the authors’ efforts to collect data at both migrant origin and migrant destination. This method of linking migrant origin with destination proved to have a long-lasting influence in the field of migration studies (Landale et al. 2000; Massey et al. 1987).

While W. I. Thomas was studying the Polish peasants, his other colleagues at the University of Chicago were busy studying other aspects of immigrant life, again using Chicago as a social laboratory. Among them, two of the most influential sociologists, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, proposed the idea of assimilation to describe the experience of immigrants and minorities. According to Park and Burgess (1969),

assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life. (P. 735)

This assimilation paradigm has long been the dominant perspective in understanding the trajectories of successive generations of immigrants. The paradigm has been significantly expanded and elaborated by Milton Gordon (1964).

Long a paradigm for the study of immigrants and various ethnic groups, the assimilation thesis has recently met some challenges when applied to the situation with post-1965 nonwhite immigrants (Zhou 1999). In light of evidence that is not entirely consistent with the assimilation perspective, Portes and Zhou (1993) proposed an alternative theoretical paradigm, known as “segmented assimilation.” The key insight of segmented assimilation is that the assimilation process will not be the same for all contemporary immigrant groups. The assimilation process is segmented because of possible divergent paths for different immigrant groups. Some will follow the

## 490 • LOCALITY AND SOCIAL LIFE

time-honored path of rapid acculturation and joining the mainstream white middle class. Others will experience socioeconomic mobility but will preserve the immigrant community's values and maintain some degree of ethnic culture and tradition. The third possibility is that some immigrant groups (mainly West Indians) actually experience downward mobility, merging with the native-born African American population in inner cities (Zhou 1999). Although scholars agree on these divergent paths of mobility for immigrants, no one declares that the assimilation paradigm from the Chicago School of Sociology is dead.

In a recent book, Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003) make the most forceful defense of the assimilation paradigm. Examining evidence on language, socioeconomic mobility, and intermarriage, they show that assimilation continues to be a dominant force that characterizes today's immigrants and their children. In defending the assimilation perspective, Alba and Nee also remind us of two important facts. One is that today's immigrants and their children live in a favorable social environment as a result of institutional changes brought about by the civil rights movement. Second, the experience of earlier generations of European immigrants tells us that in the process of becoming Americans, immigrants also changed American society. Ultimately, it is also an empirical question whether the assimilation paradigm will continue to hold for the new immigrants and their children in the twenty-first century.

### MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: MYTH AND REALITY

There is a reciprocal relationship between migration and development. Migration is driven by economic development. Economic development in urban areas generates demand for labor, but economic development in rural areas makes many peasants redundant. As a result, a large number of peasants move to cities to work in the burgeoning manufacturing sectors. In the case of European countries, during the period of the Industrial Revolution, Massey (1988) argues that "the processes of capital accumulation, enclosure, and market creation weaken individuals' social and economic ties to rural communities, making large-scale migration possible" (p. 392). Some of the migrants went to cities in Europe, and others chose to migrate to the United States. As a result, in the period from 1885 to 1914, 55 million international migrants from Europe arrived in the United States (Hatton and Williamson 1998).

At first, it may seem to be straightforward to appreciate the idea that marketization and economic development give rise to rural to urban migration. However, sometimes the logic may be misunderstood by policymakers and the general public when facing concrete policy decisions. Take the case of international migration from Mexico to the United States, for example. The common perception is that Mexicans want to come to the United States because their

country is poor. Thus, the argument goes that if we help Mexicans develop their economy, it would stem the tide of migration from Mexico. While this is certainly the case in the long run, in the short run, economic development increases migration rather than reduces it (Massey 1988). The large increase in migration during the Industrial Revolution in Europe is a classic example of how economic development can increase international migration (Hatton and Williamson 1998; Massey 1988).

The same logic also applies to internal migration. Similar forces have been operating to stimulate migration in developing countries (see Brockerhoff 2000; Caldwell 1973 for African countries; Massey 1988 for the case of Mexico; and Liang 2001 for the case of China). Perhaps the most notable country for migration in the last two decades is China. Since the late 1970s, China has been in the process of transition to a market-oriented economy, which has provided a major impetus for a large volume of internal migration, mainly from rural to urban areas. Even by conservative estimates, China's intercountry migrant population reached nearly 80 million in 2000 (Liang and Ma 2004). The fundamental changes in the Chinese countryside are the institutional changes in the mode of production: the adoption of a household responsibility system. Essentially, it is a transition from a system of production team (consisting of many households) to household-based farming, which greatly improved the efficiency of agricultural production. At the same time, market reforms in urban China, as manifested in an increasing flow of foreign capital to coastal regions and gradually reduced barriers for migrants, paved the way for a large number of rural migrants. The lesson is that not anticipating the demographic consequences of market transition often leaves the government ill prepared for the sudden rise in the migrant population.

### MIGRATION NETWORKS, CUMULATIVE CAUSATION, AND PERPETUATION OF MIGRATION

There is a consensus among students of migration that migrant networks play a very important role in the migration process. According to Massey et al. (1993), "migration networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through kinship, friendship, and shared community origin" (p. 728). The existence of such migration networks is important in lowering the costs of migration and consequently increasing its benefits. Migrants who are from community origins provide the best channel of information about potential destinations and in the case of undocumented international migration, the best route for crossing the borders. Migration networks are equally important once migrants arrive at destination areas in terms of providing information on jobs, housing, and other potential service needs for new arrivals. Students of

migration from different fields have demonstrated the importance of migration networks in a variety of settings. In some cases, migration networks were seen as “chain migration,” and in other cases, “family and friends” have an influence in the context of both internal and international migration (McDonald and McDonald 1974; Tilly and Brown 1967; Walker and Hannan 1989).

China presents a good example of internal migration. In Beijing, the formation of Zhejiang village is a testimony to the importance of province-based ethnicity and migration networks (Liang 2001; Ma and Xiang 1998). Zhejiang village (Zhejiang *cun*) is located several miles south of Tiananmen Square and is a place where people from Zhejiang province (mainly the Wenzhou area) converge to conduct a variety of businesses (primarily garment workshops and shops). Similarly, China’s coastal regions, with a large number of joint-venture enterprises (such as shoe factories and toy-manufacturing factories), have attracted a great number of internal migrants from the inner provinces. Fieldwork in some of the factories in coastal China suggests clear patterns of chain migration: Migrants from the same province tend to go to the same factories where previous migrants from the province work (Liang and Morooka 2005). One foreman in a Taiwanese-owned factory helps recruit over 300 workers from her hometown in Sichuan province in central China. From the factory’s management point of view, they also like this recruitment strategy because it is easy to manage, employee turnover is low, and the workforce is likely to be stable.

Similar systematic studies have also been conducted on the settlement patterns of international migrants in the United States. Using pooled cross-sectional time series data, Walker and Hannan (1989) studied the settlement patterns of migrants and demonstrated the role of migrant stock and lagged migration in the settlement patterns of immigrants in U.S. metropolitan areas.

The simple idea of migration networks has been further developed in other directions. One is to generate innovative hypotheses such as mechanisms for changes in educational selectivity (Massey et al. 1994). Students of migration have long realized the socioeconomic selectivity of migration. Lee (1966), for example, argued that migrants who move primarily because of “pull” factors at the place of destination are likely to be positively selected from the population at their place of origin. This positive selection includes individuals with higher education. What is less clear is whether migration selection will diminish or increase over time. In a recent study of international migration from Mexico to the United States, Massey et al. (1994) noted some apparent discrepancies in terms of the relationship between migration and socioeconomic selectivity across different communities. For example, some studies found that migrants were mainly landless workers, and others suggested that migrants were mainly landowners. Massey et al. argued that what appears to be an inconsistency in the socioeconomic selectivity of migration actually has some internal logic once we take a comparative perspective

across communities and over time. They further argued that in the initial stage of migration, it is always the people who are in the middle of the socioeconomic hierarchy who are likely to move. This is because migration is a risky and costly enterprise; thus, poor people may find it too costly to move, while rich people do not have much incentive to move.

Massey et al. (1994) further stated that “social capital, however, plays a powerful role in mitigating these costs and risks, and its accumulation over time tends to reduce the selectivity of migration” (p. 1495). In other words, in the initial stage of the migration process, migration is likely to be positively selective of individuals from higher socioeconomic strata. Over time, as more and more individuals participate in the migration process, it will reach a point where it is likely that a potential migrant would know someone (either a friend or family member) who is a migrant in a destination community. Because of the utility of this social capital, finding jobs and housing for a potential migrant is a lot easier, and thus, the costs of migration are likely to fall and migration selectivity diminishes. In sum, this literature on migration suggests the following hypothesis: Over time, migration will become less selective in the socioeconomic background of migrants. Even though Massey et al. (1994) illustrate this rationale using the example of international migration from Mexico to the United States, research on the great South to North migration in the United States conducted by Tolnay (1998) led to similar conclusions. Using the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series of the U.S. Census Bureau, Tolnay (1998) showed that during the period from 1940 to 1990, the positive selection of migration from the South declined appreciably.

This decline in education selectivity has some implications for migrants and policy. From the perspective of potential migrants, this declining educational selectivity means that as a vehicle of social mobility, migration becomes more accessible to a much broader segment of the population in a community. From the perspective of the migrant-receiving community, the implication is that the “quality” (as measured by education) of migrants is likely to decline over time. Of course, we need to note that this decline in educational selectivity is true only when we hold access to educational opportunity constant over time. The reality is likely to be much more complex because in many migrant-sending communities, expansion of educational opportunities will change the educational composition of the community population over time.

Migration network theory initially deals with factors at the individual level alone. Many empirical studies have documented the evidence that having a family member already a migrant or having a migrant friend significantly increases the probability of migration for other family members. In recent years, migration network theory has been further expanded and elaborated to consider the impact of migration in the community context. This is commonly known as the “cumulative causation theory of

## 492 • LOCALITY AND SOCIAL LIFE

migration.” According to this perspective, “causation is cumulative in that 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).

Scholars have identified several mechanisms operating at the community level that sustain the momentum of migration. Here, we highlight three of them. First, migration will change the distribution of income in the migrant-sending community. The major idea here is the thesis of relative deprivation. In sociology, the concept of relative deprivation has been invoked to study mobility and rebellion (Gurr 1969; Tilly 1978) as well as military morale during World War II (Stouffer 1949–1950). In the migration field, some people migrate to increase their absolute income and wealth, and others might increase their relative income in the community of origin. Prior to initiation of migration, income distribution in these communities tends to be relatively equal; everybody is probably equally poor. Once people start migrating, and especially when remittances are sent home, income distribution in the community changes. Those who are otherwise content now think that they are more deprived because they see their neighbors’ income rising sharply. This sense of relative deprivation stimulates more people to think about ways to increase their income, very often by migration.

This sense of relative deprivation is manifested in other ways as well. One of the most important assets for households is housing. In all migrant communities across the globe, we find that one of the high priorities for migrants once they accumulate enough money is to build a house or add more amenities to their houses. This is particularly the case with international migrants, where the income from migration can be highly lucrative. Liang and Zhang (2004) documented that in China’s Fujian province, where there has been a major immigration flow to the New York metropolitan area, a large portion of remittances has been devoted to building big mansions, sometimes big mansions where few people actually reside. It is impossible to build these luxury houses for households whose members work in the community. These houses are symbols of migrants’ success. However, for other households, viewing these luxury houses on a daily basis, it naturally creates feelings of relative deprivation, which may lead them to consider migrating internationally as well. This thesis of relative deprivation has been tested systematically by Stark and Taylor (1988) in the context of Mexican migration to the United States.

Second, migration also affects the organization of agricultural production. Because of the availability of more disposable income, migrant households are more likely to use capital-intensive methods (the use of machines and fertilizers and good-quality seeds) than nonmigrant households for agricultural production. The use of capital-intensive methods reduces the demand for agricultural labor and thus creates more impetus for migration. However, we should note that the empirical evidence is more complicated than

what is presented in this view. In China, during the last two decades, internal and international migrations have had a major impact on migrant-sending communities. The typical pattern of change in agricultural production for households with migrants is not only to use capital-intensive methods but also to hire people to work on the land assigned to the household. Some of the people hired are local peasants, and others are from remote and poor provinces. To the extent that some local peasants are hired, migration actually generates a demand for labor in agricultural production, which has the potential of discouraging further migration.

Third, perhaps the most important impact of migration on the migrant-sending community is the creation of a “culture of migration.” Over time, migration changes values and perceptions in the migrant-sending communities and consequently reshapes and redefines what is considered to be normative behavior among young people. This is the case in many communities where migration is prevalent, that migration becomes the rite of passage and the thing to do for young people. In fact, negative sanctions often accompany people who are not willing to leave. In migrant-sending communities of Fujian province in southern China, young people who are not willing to leave are often considered *mei chuxi* (with no great future).

This culture of migration also has an impact on school-age children; some of them see their future in a foreign destination and pay less attention to schoolwork. In sum, migration network theory and cumulative causation of migration suggest behavioral changes at the individual level and the impact of migration at the community level, all of which lead to the increase and perpetuation of migration. One important implication is that because of these changes at the individual and community levels, migration becomes more and more a self-feeding process and independent of the original socioeconomic forces that led to it in the first place. Therefore, migration becomes more and more difficult to control.

## MIGRATION, RACE, AND POVERTY

One of the most important topics in migration research in the context of the United States is the migration and residential mobility of African Americans. The topic is important because migration often leads to social mobility because of new jobs and opportunities. Second, because of the history of racial discrimination in the United States, migration is also a barometer to measure the nature of race relations and degree of discrimination, especially in housing markets.

The “Great Migration” of African Americans from the South is perhaps one of the most important demographic events of twentieth-century America and has stimulated many sociological studies to identify its causes and consequences. As a result of this migration, by 1980, over 4 million southern-born blacks lived outside that region (Tolnay 2003). A critical factor in the initiation of black migration

from the South was the enactment of more restrictive immigration policies (with the intention of limiting immigrants from Eastern and Southern European countries) in the 1920s (Collins 1997). This in some ways provides a unique opportunity to conduct two major comparative studies. One is to compare African Americans who moved from the South to the North with the Eastern and Southern European immigrants. Stanley Lieberson took advantage of this opportunity to conduct such a study. Lieberson (1980) found, for example, that there was clearly an occupational queue, with blacks (both northern born and southern born) located in the lowest strata with unskilled and semiskilled occupations. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and native-born whites were above blacks in the occupational queue and enjoyed advantages in getting desirable jobs.

The second comparative study was the study of southern-born blacks with northern-born blacks. This comparison arrived at very intriguing results regarding family patterns and socioeconomic attainment. Earlier work by Lieberson and Wilkinson (1976) found that southern-born blacks were more likely than northern-born blacks to be married and to reside with their spouse. Recent studies (Tolnay 2003; Tolnay and Crowder 1999; Wilson 2001) further suggest that compared with northern-born blacks, southern-born blacks were less likely to have children out of wedlock, and their children were more likely to reside with both parents. Other intriguing findings suggest that southern migrants were more likely to be employed, had higher incomes, and were less likely to be on public assistance (Long 1974; Tolnay 2003). Although scholars have offered a variety of explanations for the different outcomes for southern migrants and northern-born blacks, Tolnay (2003) states that “for the most part the reasons behind the economic and family advantages enjoyed by southern migrants over northerners remain a mystery” (p. 220).

So far we have discussed internal migration of African Americans from the South to the North. We now turn to another aspect of migration for African Americans: residential mobility. It is well established that African Americans experience the most extreme residential segregation among all minority groups, and Massey and Denton (1993) went so far as to characterize African Americans’ residential experience as “hyper-segregation.” Although scholars have devoted substantial efforts to document residential patterns among different groups, relatively few studies have actually looked at the dynamics of residential mobility or lack of it for African Americans, which presumably plays a major role in the patterns of residential segregation. In addition, residential mobility is important because mobility is believed to lead to better neighborhoods that often enhance employment and educational prospects or neighborhoods with a greater variety of services and facilities (South and Crowder 1997). Combining census data with longitudinal data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, South and Crowder (1997) examined the effect of the sociodemographic characteristics of

individuals as well as the community on residential mobility—namely, from poor neighborhoods to better neighborhoods. They found that compared with whites, blacks are less likely to move out of poor neighborhoods and much more likely to move into them, even when socioeconomic status variables are controlled. This underscores the disadvantage that African Americans face in residential mobility.

Residential mobility for African Americans has also been considered as one of the underlying reasons for the concentrated poverty facing African Americans (Wilson 1987). In his highly acclaimed book *The Truly Disadvantaged*, William Julius Wilson (1987) developed an argument and presented evidence to explain the concentrated poverty in urban America. One of the major forces identified by Wilson (1987) was migration of middle-class African Americans away from mixed-income neighborhoods to suburban locations where the majority of whites reside. However, scholars have contested the evidence, whether it is sufficient to support Wilson’s argument. In one of the first papers to test this “black middle-class flight” hypothesis, Massey et al. (1994) used data from the Panel Study on Income Dynamics to show that poor blacks are moving out of poor neighborhoods at higher rates than nonpoor blacks, which is not consistent with Wilson’s argument. Quillian (1999) argues that Massey et al.’s (1994) method is not well suited for capturing change over time. Using a method that he believed was better at capturing changes over time, Quillian (1999) shows results that are supportive of Wilson’s (1987) argument—that is, blacks, and especially poor blacks, move into white nonpoor neighborhoods more often than they move out. Thus, the debate on the black middle-class flight hypothesis has not yet been settled. Overall, the most interesting aspect of studying race and migration/residential mobility sociologically is to place migration issues in the larger context of race relations in American society.

## THE FUTURE OF MIGRATION RESEARCH

Several scholars have characterized the current period as the age of migration. According to the latest report from the United Nations, there are currently 175 million people who reside in countries outside their countries of birth (World Commission on Social Dimension of Globalization 2004). Globalization and growth in international trade are likely to stimulate further international migration in the years to come. At the same time, it is also projected that sometime in this century, for the first time, the world will see over 50% of the population residing in urban areas. Most of this increase in urbanization will be achieved through rural to urban migration. This is clearly the best of times for students of migration. Sid Goldstein (1976) once said that “migration is the stepchild in the field of demography.” But times have changed. In the fields of both international and internal migration, we have witnessed major

## 494 • LOCALITY AND SOCIAL LIFE

developments and progress in the last two decades. In this chapter, we have reviewed some of these major developments, but obviously this review cannot do justice to the vast literature on migration (international migration and internal migration). For example, in the United States, the large wave of post-1965 immigration has been accompanied by a great wave of studies on immigrant entrepreneurship, assimilation, and intermarriage; the initiation and perpetuation of immigration; the issues confronting second-generation immigrants; immigration and gender; transnationalism in the new migration era; the economic impact of immigration; and, more recently, religion and immigration. In the remainder of the chapter, we discuss some of the potentially fruitful areas for future research. The list is, of course, highly selective and reflects the author's bias. But it does identify some of the potential areas of migration research that are likely to be important in the years to come. In some cases, the research is concerned with international migration or internal migration; in other cases, it may be concerned with both.

First, more comparative studies of immigration are needed. As a field of study, we have accumulated a lot of knowledge about international migration for each country of destination, but we need more studies to take a comparative perspective. For example, as Massey et al. (1994) stated, "Far too much research is centered in Mexico, which because of its unique relationship to the United States may be unrepresentative of broader patterns and trends" (p. 739). Over the years, Massey and his associates have studied many aspects of Mexican migration to the United States, including the impact of migration networks, the changing educational selectivity of immigrants, the comparison of wage rates between undocumented immigrants and documented immigrants, and the impact of immigration on migrant-sending communities. It is important that we carry out similar studies for immigrant groups from other countries to see if the findings from the Mexican case can be generalizable to other groups of immigrants and countries of migrant origin. Of course, it is not enough to simply carry out similar studies for different groups or countries of origin. To the extent that different findings emerge, we need to identify the potential reasons behind them, which could stimulate further theoretical development of international migration. Another kind of comparative study design is to study similar immigrant groups in many immigrant destinations. Essentially, we hold migrant group characteristics constant (people with the same language, culture, and religion, etc.) to see how they behave and fare in different host country contexts. This would allow researchers to examine how host country characteristics, such as immigration policies, the context of reception, and history of immigration, affect the adaptation process of the immigrant group. Along this direction, Richard Alba (2005) has done some pioneering work examining assimilation and exclusion among second-generation immigrants in France, Germany, and the United States.

Still another comparative study could be to examine a particular community of origin to study how people choose different migration destination countries. We know that immigrants from Peru have gone to different countries: Japan, the United States, and some European countries. We know relatively little about the forces behind the decision to choose one country of destination over another. China's Fujian province is a particularly good example in this regard. There has been a major flow of international migrants from the Fujian province to the New York metropolitan area over the last two decades. The New York-bound immigrants are for the most part from eastern Fujian. It is interesting that people from northern Fujian choose to migrate to European countries such as Italy and Hungary. Systematic studies are clearly needed to explore the different patterns of migration for people from different parts of the Fujian province.

Second, although we know a lot about migration and its consequences, we have limited knowledge on return migration. Return migration may be very high in some cases. Previous studies of return migration suggest that in other countries, it may account for upward of one-third of the migrant flow (Gmelch 1980; Warren and Kraly 1985). Jasso and Rosenzweig (1982) estimate that as high as 56% of the 1971 cohort of legal Mexican immigrants may have left the United States by 1979. In addition, the nature of return migration has important theoretical implications for the subsequent study of migrant adaptation in the host destination (Gmelch 1980). If, for example, the return migrants are positively selected on socioeconomic characteristics, the current literature on migrant adaptation at the place of destination may be biased in terms of underestimating the effect of assimilation. In the case of immigrants in the United States, a better understanding of the selectivity of return immigrants has the potential to resolve the controversy surrounding the thesis of declining quality of immigrants, as argued by Borjas (1999).

Moreover, return migration is also important because return migrants often bring back the remittances (i.e., financial capital) in addition to human capital in terms of acquired skills and work experience, factors that are crucial for economic development in the place of origin. Furthermore, return migration has important health consequences, as evidenced during the recent global severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak. In addition to contagious or infectious diseases like SARS or avian flu, return migration also poses serious concerns for public health in terms of sexually transmitted diseases because of the high likelihood that migrants are engaging in unprotected/unsafe sex and subsequently transmitting the disease to their spouses or new partners on return (Yang 2002). Therefore, the magnitude and direction of return migration have implications for the public health of migrants as well as their spouses/partners and family members. Last, return migration is also closely linked to the idea of transnationalism, an area of research that has also received more attention from scholars in recent years. Return migrants are likely to



remigrate or travel back and forth between countries (and communities). Understanding the nature of return migration may provide new insights into transnational activities.

Third, the field of migration should take advantage of recent developments in research methodology. For example, multilevel modeling is now a standard statistical technique to examine the impact of context/community on individual behavior. Recent studies on the impact of social context on fertility behavior have taken full advantage of state-of-the-art technology in modeling contextual effects (Axinn and Yabiku 2001). Students of migration should find this kind of modeling useful because most of our theoretical ideas emphasize the context of migration (at the village, province, and country levels). The community-level characteristics include socioeconomic conditions, employment opportunities, and measures of income inequality. We can even test some of the ideas concerning migration networks (Liang and Morooka 2005). Within the multilevel model framework, testing of interaction effects between community-level variables and individual-level variables can be easily performed. For example, we can examine whether educated individuals are more likely to

use migration networks in the initiation of migration. A recent paper on immigrants' employment in 18 countries (using contextual-level variables at the country level) is also in this direction (Van Tubergen et al. 2004).

So far, we have discussed research areas in international and internal migration. Research on residential mobility in developing countries is also lacking. A quick search of the sociological abstracts on residential mobility in the last 10 years turns out 317 articles on developed countries and 20 on developing countries. The international comparisons on residential mobility often focus on developed countries. Data availability may be the reason for this. We should note, however, that the magnitude of residential mobility in developing countries can be enormous. Data from the Chinese 2000 census show that nearly 40 million people made intracounty moves (residential mobility) (Liang and Ma 2004). Another demographic giant, India, may be in a similar position. As developing countries become more and more urbanized and with the middle-class population increasing in many parts of the developing world, the time may be right to turn our attention to the study of residential mobility in developing countries as well.