



A Theory of Migration

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A THEORY OF MIGRATION*

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RESUMEN

El concepto de migración abarca una serie de factores sobre lugar de origen y de destino, obstáculos intervinientes y características personales.

Este simple marco de trabajo es empleado con el fin de formular una serie de hipótesis acerca del volumen de la migración bajo diversas condiciones, el desarrollo de corrientes y contracorrientes migratorias y las características de los migrantes. Siempre que ha sido posible, las hipótesis se presentan en forma tal que puedan comprobarse con datos anexos. Para otras hipótesis los datos no son disponibles actualmente; otras pueden requerir reestructuración en términos de datos disponibles.

Las variaciones en el volumen de migración están relacionadas con la diversidad de las regiones y la población que la habita, con el grado de dificultad de los obstáculos intervinientes y con las fluctuaciones de la economía.

La relación entre corrientes y contracorrientes migratorias es analizada en base a la similitud o discimilitud de origen y destino, al tipo de obstáculos intervinientes y a las condiciones económicas. La migración es considerada selectiva y el grado de selectividad depende de un número de factores los cuales a menudo dan como resultado una selección bimodal.

It was a remark of Farr's to the effect that migration appeared to go on without any definite law that led Ravenstein to present his celebrated paper on the laws of migration before the Royal Statistical Society on March 17, 1885.¹ This paper was based upon the British Census of 1881, but in 1889 Ravenstein returned to the subject with data from more than twenty countries.² Finding corroboration for his earlier views in this broader investigation, he also entitled his second paper, "The Laws of Migration," though he noted that it was ambitiously headed and warned that "laws of population, and economic laws generally, have not the rigidity of physical laws." An irreverent critic, Mr. N. A. Humphreys, immediately re-

torted that "After carefully reading Mr. Ravenstein's former paper, and listening to the present one, [I arrived] at the conclusion that migration was rather distinguished for its lawlessness than for having any definite law."³ Mr. Stephen Bourne's criticism was less devastating but logically more serious: "that although Mr. Ravenstein had spoken of 'Laws of Migration,' he had not formulated them in such a categorical order that they could be criticized."⁴ Nevertheless, Ravenstein's papers have stood the test of time and remain the starting point for work in migration theory.

As found in the first paper and extended or amended in the second, Ravenstein's laws are summarized in his own words below. The first five of these items include the laws as they are usually quoted, while items 6 and 7, though taken from the general conclusions of his second paper, are not ordinarily included. This, however, is due more to Ravenstein's way of numbering the laws and to his somewhat tentative statement of the dominance of the economic motive than to his own estimate of the importance of his conclusions.

* Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Kansas City, April 23, 1965 ("Population Studies Center Series in Studies of Human Resources," No. 1). This paper has benefited greatly from discussions with Professor Surinder K. Mehta.

¹ E. G. Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, XLVIII, Part 2 (June, 1885), 167-227. Also Reprint No. S-482 in the "Bobbs-Merrill Series in the Social Sciences."

² Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, LII (June, 1889), 241-301. Also Reprint No. S-483 in the "Bobbs-Merrill Series in the Social Sciences."

³ "Discussion on Mr. Ravenstein's Paper," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, LII (June, 1889), 302.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

1. *Migration and distance*.—(a) “[T]he great body of our migrants only proceed a short distance” and “migrants enumerated in a certain center of absorption will . . . grow less [as distance from the center increases]” (I, pp. 198–99).⁵

(b) “Migrants proceeding long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centers of commerce and industry” (I, p. 199).

2. *Migration by stages*.—(a) “[T]here takes place consequently a universal shifting or displacement of the population, which produces ‘currents of migration,’ setting in the direction of the great centers of commerce and industry which absorb the migrants” (I, p. 198).

(b) “The inhabitants of the country immediately surrounding a town of rapid growth flock into it; the gaps thus left in the rural population are filled up by migrants from more remote districts, until the attractive force of one of our rapidly growing cities makes its influence felt, step by step, to the most remote corner of the kingdom” (I, p. 199).

(c) “The process of dispersion is the inverse of that of absorption, and exhibits similar features” (I, p. 199).

3. *Stream and counterstream*.—“Each main current of migration produces a compensating counter-current” (I, p. 199). In modern terminology, stream and counterstream have been substituted for Ravenstein’s current and counter-current.

4. *Urban-rural differences in propensity to migrate*.—“The natives of towns are less migratory than those of the rural parts of the country” (I, p. 199).

5. *Predominance of females among short-distance migrants*.—“Females appear to predominate among short-journey migrants” (II, p. 288).

6. *Technology and migration*.—“Does migration increase? I believe so! . . . Wherever I was able to make a comparison I found that an increase in the means of locomotion and a development of manufactures and commerce have led to an increase of migration” (II, p. 288).

7. *Dominance of the economic motive*.—“Bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation, an unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings, and even compulsion (slave trade, transportation), all have produced and are still producing currents of migration, but none of

these currents can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to ‘better’ themselves in material respects” (II, p. 286).

This century has brought no comparable excursion into migration theory. With the development of equilibrium analysis, economists abandoned the study of population, and most sociologists and historians are reluctant to deal with masses of statistical data. A crew of demographers has sprung up, but they have been largely content with empirical findings and unwilling to generalize. Indeed, Vance, in his presidential address to the Population Association of America, entitled “Is Theory for Demographers?” contends that demography, for lack of theory, remains unstructured and raises the question, “Is there room [in demography] for the bold and audacious?”⁶

In the three-quarters of a century which have passed, Ravenstein has been much quoted and occasionally challenged. But, while there have been literally thousands of migration studies in the meantime, few additional generalizations have been advanced. True, there have been studies of age and migration, sex and migration, race and migration, distance and migration, education and migration, the labor force and migration, and so forth; but most studies which focused upon the characteristics of migrants have been conducted with little reference to the volume of migration, and few studies have considered the reasons for migration or the assimilation of the migrant at destination. So little developed was the field in the 1930’s that Dorothy Thomas and her associates concluded that the only generalization that could be made in regard to differentials in internal migration was that migrants tended to be young adults or persons in their late teens.⁷ Later Bogue

⁶ Rupert B. Vance, “Is Theory for Demographers?” *Social Forces*, XXXI, (October, 1952), 9–13.

⁷ Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *Research Memorandum on Migration Differentials* (New York: Social Science Research Council, Bulletin 43, 1938).

⁵ In the quotations from Ravenstein, “I” refers to the 1885 paper and “II” to the 1889 paper.

and Hagood trenchantly summed up the current state of knowledge under the heading "An Approach to a Theory of Differential Migration,"⁸ and Otis Durant Duncan contributed a valuable essay on "The Theory and Consequences of Mobility of Farm Population,"⁹ but both were restricted to the United States and both were hampered by a lack of data which has since been partially repaired. Most essays in migration theory have dealt with migration and distance and advance mathematical formulations of the relationship. Perhaps the best known of recent theories of migration is Stouffer's theory of intervening opportunities.¹⁰

Except for Dudley Kirk,¹¹ Ravenstein seems to have been the last person to make a detailed comparison of the volume of internal migration or the characteristics of migrants within a goodly number of nations. Generally speaking, considerations of internal migration have been divorced from considerations of immigration and emigration, and very short moves, such as those within counties in the United States or within *Kreise* in Germany, have not been considered along with the longer distance movement that is labeled migration. Also, such forced migration as the refugee movements of World War II and its after-

math have not been grouped with the so-called free migration.

It is the purpose of this paper to attempt the development of a general schema into which a variety of spatial movements can be placed and, from a small number of what would seem to be self-evident propositions, to deduce a number of conclusions with regard to the volume of migration, the development of streams and counterstreams, and the characteristics of migrants. As a starting point for this analysis, a definition of migration is introduced which is considerably more general than that usually applied.

DEFINITION OF MIGRATION

Migration is defined broadly as a permanent or semipermanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration. Thus, a move across the hall from one apartment to another is counted as just as much an act of migration as a move from Bombay, India, to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, though, of course, the initiation and consequences of such moves are vastly different. However, not all kinds of spatial mobility are included in this definition. Excluded, for example, are the continual movements of nomads and migratory workers, for whom there is no long-term residence, and temporary moves like those to the mountains for the summer.

No matter how short or how long, how easy or how difficult, every act of migration involves an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles. Among the set of intervening obstacles, we include the distance of the move as one that is always present.

FACTORS IN THE ACT OF MIGRATION

The factors which enter into the decision to migrate and the process of migration may be summarized under four headings, as follows:

⁸ Donald J. Bogue and Margaret Marman Hagood, *Subregional Migration in the United States, 1935-1940*, Vol. II: *Differential Migration in the Corn and Cotton Belts* (Miami, Ohio: Scripps Foundation Studies in Population Distribution, No. 6, 1953), pp. 124-27.

⁹ Otis Durant Duncan, "The Theory and Consequences of Mobility of Farm Population," *Oklahoma Agriculture Experiment Station Circular No. 88* (Stillwater, Okla., May, 1940). Reprinted in Joseph J. Spengler and Otis Dudley Duncan, *Population Theory and Policy* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), pp. 417-34.

¹⁰ Samuel A. Stouffer, "Intervening Opportunities: A Theory Relating Mobility and Distance," *American Sociological Review*, V (December, 1940), 845-67, and "Intervening Opportunities and Competing Migrants," *Journal of Regional Science*, II (1960), 1-26.

¹¹ Dudley Kirk, *Europe's Population in the Interwar Years* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946).

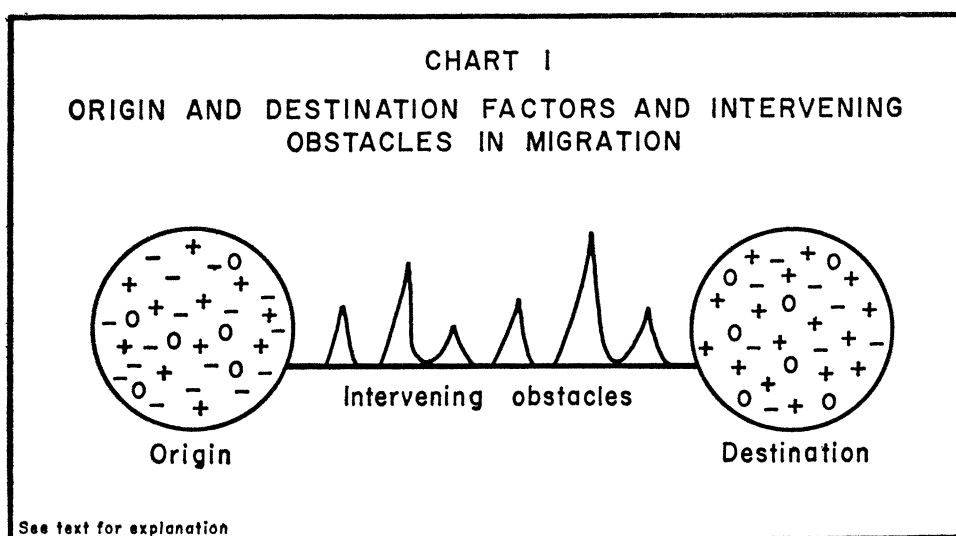
1. Factors associated with the area of origin.
2. Factors associated with the area of destination.
3. Intervening obstacles.
4. Personal factors.

The first three of these are indicated schematically in Chart 1. In every area there are countless factors which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it, and there are others which tend to repel them. These are shown in the diagram as + and - signs. There are others, shown as 0's, to which people are essentially indifferent. Some of these factors affect most people in much the same way, while others affect different people in different ways. Thus a good climate is attractive and a bad climate is repulsive to nearly everyone; but a good school system may be counted as a + by a parent with young children and a - by a houseowner with no children because of the high real estate taxes engendered, while an unmarried male without taxable property is indifferent to the situation.

Clearly the set of + 's and - 's at both origin and destination is differently defined for every migrant or prospective migrant. Nevertheless, we may distinguish classes of people who react in similar fashion to the same general sets of factors

at origin and destination. Indeed, since we can never specify the exact set of factors which impels or prohibits migration for a given person, we can, in general, only set forth a few which seem of special importance and note the general or average reaction of a considerable group. Needless to say, the factors that hold and attract or repel people are precisely understood neither by the social scientist nor the persons directly affected. Like Bentham's calculus of pleasure and pain, the calculus of + 's and - 's at origin and destination is always inexact.

There are, however, important differences between the factors associated with the area of origin and those associated with the area of destination. Persons living in an area have an immediate and often long-term acquaintance with the area and are usually able to make considered and unhurried judgments regarding them. This is not necessarily true of the factors associated with the area of destination. Knowledge of the area of destination is seldom exact, and indeed some of the advantages and disadvantages of an area can only be perceived by living there. Thus there is always an element of ignorance or even mystery about the area of destination, and there must always be



some uncertainty with regard to the reception of a migrant in a new area.

Another important difference between the factors associated with area of origin and area of destination is related to stages of the life cycle. For many migrants the area of origin is that in which the formative years have been spent and for which the general good health of youth and the absence of annoying responsibilities create in retrospect an overevaluation of the positive elements in the environment and an underevaluation of the negative elements. On the other hand, the difficulties associated with assimilation in a new environment may create in the newly arrived a contrary but equally erroneous evaluation of the positive and negative factors at destination.

While migration may result from a comparison of factors at origin and destination, a simple calculus of +'s and -'s does not decide the act of migration. The balance in favor of the move must be enough to overcome the natural inertia which always exists. Furthermore, between every two points there stands a set of intervening obstacles which may be slight in some instances and insurmountable in others. The most studied of these obstacles is distance, which, while omnipresent, is by no means the most important. Actual physical barriers like the Berlin Wall may be interposed, or immigration laws may restrict the movement. Different people are, of course, affected in different ways by the same set of obstacles. What may be trivial to some people—the cost of transporting household goods, for example—may be prohibitive to others.

The effect of a given set of obstacles depends also upon the impedimenta with which the migrant is encumbered. For some migrants these are relatively unimportant and the difficulty of surmounting the intervening obstacles is consequently minimal; but for others, making the same move, the impedimenta, among which we must reckon children and other dependents, greatly increase the difficulties posed by intervening obstacles.

Finally, there are many personal factors which affect individual thresholds and facilitate or retard migration. Some of these are more or less constant throughout the life of the individual, while others are associated with stages in the life cycle and in particular with the sharp breaks that denote passage from one stage to another.

In this connection, we must note that it is not so much the actual factors at origin and destination as the perception of these factors which results in migration. Personal sensitivities, intelligence, and awareness of conditions elsewhere enter into the evaluation of the situation at origin, and knowledge of the situation at destination depends upon personal contacts or upon sources of information which are not universally available. In addition, there are personalities which are resistant to change—change of residence as well as other changes—and there are personalities which welcome change for the sake of change. For some individuals, there must be compelling reasons for migration, while for others little provocation or promise suffices.

The decision to migrate, therefore, is never completely rational, and for some persons the rational component is much less than the irrational. We must expect, therefore, to find many exceptions to our generalizations since transient emotions, mental disorder, and accidental occurrences account for a considerable proportion of the total migrations.

Indeed, not all persons who migrate reach that decision themselves. Children are carried along by their parents, willy-nilly, and wives accompany their husbands though it tears them away from environments they love. There are clearly stages in the life cycle in which the positive elements at origin are overwhelmingly important in limiting migration, and there are times in which such bonds are slackened with catastrophic suddenness. Children are bound to the familial residence by the need for care and subsistence, but, as one grows older, ages are reached at which it is customary to cease one stage of development and begin an-

other. Such times are the cessation of education, entrance into the labor force, or retirement from work. Marriage, too, constitutes such a change in the life cycle, as does the dissolution of marriage, either through divorce or the death of a spouse.

Many more or less random occurrences can also greatly reduce the hold of an area upon a person and increase the attractiveness of other areas. Victims of injustice as well as the perpetrators of crime may be forced to leave the area in which they are living. These and other events which affect but a few persons in the total community may nevertheless bulk large in the motivation of the migrant group.

This conceptualization of migration as involving a set of factors at origin and destination, a set of intervening obstacles, and a series of personal factors is a simple one which may perhaps be accepted as self-evident. It is now argued that, simple though this is, it provides a framework for much of what we know about migration and indicates a number of fields for investigation. It is used below to formulate a series of hypotheses about the volume of migration under varying conditions, the development of stream and counter-stream, and the characteristics of migrants.

VOLUME OF MIGRATION

1. *The volume of migration within a given territory varies with the degree of diversity of areas included in that territory.*—If migration, as we have assumed, results in part from a consideration of positive and negative factors at origin and destination, then a high degree of diversity among areas should result in high levels of migration. These we find in countries which are being opened up for settlement, as was the United States in the nineteenth century, eastern Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and Siberia in the twentieth century. Under such conditions, opportunities arise which are sufficient to attract to them persons whose dissatisfaction with their places of origin is little more than minimal. Very

great attractions spring up suddenly, as, for example, the discovery of gold in California, of silver in Colorado, and the opening up of Indian Territory for white settlement. The servicing of such a movement, in terms of providing transportation, protection, supplies, and the niceties as well as the necessities of life, creates highly specialized but often very lucrative opportunities. Thus, pioneers and settlers are accompanied by soldiers and merchants and ladies of fortune, who indeed may push ahead of the wave of settlement to establish outposts and nodal points.

The end of the period of settlement does not necessarily imply a decrease in areal diversity. On the contrary, the industrialization, which has traditionally followed settlement, is a great creator of areal diversity. In a dynamic economy, new opportunities are continually created in places to which workers must be drawn, and old enterprises are ruthlessly abandoned when they are no longer profitable.

2. *The volume of migration varies with the diversity of people.*—The diversity of people also affects the volume of migration. Where there is a great sameness among people—whether in terms of race or ethnic origin, of education, of income, or tradition—we may expect a lesser rate of migration than where there is great diversity. A diversity of people implies the existence of groups that are specially fitted for given pursuits. Thus, we find throughout northern Europe, where land has been reclaimed from the sea or marshes drained, villages which still bear the stamps of their Dutch origin. The settlement of the American West would have been more difficult had it not been for the Jewish merchant who came with or even preceded the rush of migrants, and the conditions which attended Irish and Chinese immigration made them especially responsive to the demands for railroad laborers. Indeed, it is a common finding that immigrant groups specialize in particular occupations and become scattered throughout the country wherever the need for such work is found. Thus, Chinese

laundry operators and Greek restaurant owners in the United States had their counterparts in the widely spread German and Jewish craftsmen of eastern Europe.

A diversity of people inevitably implies that the social statuses of some groups will become elevated above those of others. Discrimination among racial or ethnic groups is the rule rather than the exception, and the degree of discrimination varies from place to place, often in as extreme a manner as in the United States. Though discrimination leads to the establishment of ghettos, it also operates to bring about vast movements of people from one area to another—witness the recent migration of the American Negro.

Ethnic diversity may disappear as minorities become assimilated, but a major aim of modern civilization is to inaugurate other kinds of diversity among people. The aim of prolonged education is to create specialists, for many of whom the demand is small in any one place but widespread. For them migration is a concomitant of their vocations. Thus, engineers and professors have become peripatetic, but so have business executives and actors.

3. *The volume of migration is related to the difficulty of surmounting the intervening obstacles.*—This hypothesis hardly needs elaboration. One of the most important considerations in the decision to migrate is the difficulty of the intervening obstacles. To tunnel under the Berlin Wall is a hazardous task not to be undertaken lightly; nor was sea passage to the Americas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The removal of immigration restrictions within the Common Market countries has been accompanied by large migrations of workers from one of these countries to another. There are many other instances in history where the removal of obstacles has set in motion large flows of migrants, and others in which the imposition of new obstacles or the heightening of old ones has brought about the sharp diminution of a long continued flow.

4. *The volume of migration varies with*

fluctuations in the economy.—Business cycles affect the volume of migration in many ways, but a crucial consideration is the manner in which they affect the comparison of positive and negative factors at origin and destination. During periods of economic expansion, new businesses and industries are created at a rapid rate, and old industries begin to recruit workmen from afar. Such opportunities, however, are by no means evenly spread, and parts of the country remain in a state of relative stagnation. The contrast between the positive factors at origin and destination is therefore heightened, and the negative factors at origin seem more distressing. During depressions, however, some of the newly created businesses fail and others cease to expand. A leveling of opportunities occurs, and sheer familiarity with the place of residence (which in itself constitutes an element of safety) militates against moving to places where positive factors no longer so heavily outweigh those at home. Many tests of this hypothesis have been made, but among them the most revealing and confirming are the studies of Jerome in relation to immigration to the United States¹² and of Thomas in relation to migration within the United States.¹³

5. *Unless severe checks are imposed, both volume and rate of migration tend to increase with time.*—The volume of migration tends to increase with time for a number of reasons, among them increasing diversity of areas, increasing diversity of people, and the diminution of intervening obstacles. As indicated above, industrialization and Westernization, the explicit or implicit goals of most countries, increase the diversity of areas. It is also true that in both developed and developing coun-

¹² Harry Jerome, *Migration and Business Cycles* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research Inc., 1926).

¹³ Hope T. Eldridge and Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *Population Redistribution and Economic Growth, United States, 1870-1950*, Vol. III: *Demographic Analyses and Interrelations* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1964), 321 ff.

tries the differences between areas, both in terms of economics and of amenities, become heightened. On an international scale, the economic differences between advanced and backward countries are increasing rather than diminishing, and within all countries the differences between agricultural and urban areas are becoming more pronounced.

Other factors which tend to bring about an increase in the volume of migration are both the increasing differences among people and the view taken of these differences. In a primitive or agricultural society, specialization is limited and the development of differences among people tends to be discouraged. In an advancing society, however, specializations multiply, and there is an increased realization of both the existence and the need for special aptitudes or training. Thus, even in an agricultural area children are trained for urban pursuits, and an increased variety of developed aptitudes renders the population more susceptible to the appeal of highly special positive factors in scattered places.

Increasing technology plays an important role in diminishing intervening obstacles. Communication becomes easier, and transportation relative to average income becomes cheaper. Even if there were no change in the balance of factors at origin and destination, improving technology alone should result in an increase in the volume of migration.

Also operating to increase migration is migration itself. A person who has once migrated and who has once broken the bonds which tie him to the place in which he has spent his childhood is more likely to migrate again than is the person who has never previously migrated. Furthermore, succeeding migration lowers inertia even more. Once a set of intervening obstacles has been overcome, other sets do not seem so formidable, and there is an increasing ability to evaluate the positive and negative factors at origin and destination.

6. *The volume and rate of migration vary*

with the state of progress in a country or area.—As Ravenstein remarked, “Migration means life and progress; a sedentary population stagnation.”¹⁴ The reasons why this is true are similar to those advanced above under item 5. In an economically progressive country, the differences among areas are accentuated by industrial development and the differences among people by education. At the same time, intervening obstacles to migration within the country are lessened by improving technology and by political design.

We should, therefore, expect to find heavy immigration to developed countries where this is permitted and within such countries a high rate of internal migration. On the other hand, in the least developed countries we should find a largely immobile population which usually changes residence only under duress and then en masse rather than through individual action. In the United States, economically the most advanced of nations, rates of migration are unbelievably high, one in five persons changing his residence each year. In other economically advanced countries, like Sweden, Canada, or West Germany, we find this repeated at a somewhat lower level. We may argue that a high rate of progress entails a population which is continually in a state of flux, responding quickly to new opportunities and reacting swiftly to diminishing opportunities.

STREAM AND COUNTERSTREAM

1. *Migration tends to take place largely within well defined streams.*—It is a common observation that migrants proceed along well defined routes toward highly specific destinations. This is true in part because opportunities tend to be highly localized and in part because migrants must usually follow established routes of transportation. Perhaps just as important is the flow of knowledge back from destina-

¹⁴ Ravenstein, “The Laws of Migration,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, LII (June, 1889), 288.

tion to origin and, indeed, the actual recruitment of migrants at the place of origin. The overcoming of a set of intervening obstacles by early migrants lessens the difficulty of the passage for later migrants, and in effect pathways are created which pass over intervening opportunities as elevated highways pass over the countryside.

Thus the process of settlement tends to be a leapfrogging operation in which military outposts or trading centers become the focus of migration streams and the filling-up of the passed over territory is left to a later stage of development. From this point of view, the real frontiersmen are not the farmers but the merchants, the missionaries, and the military. It was in this fashion that German colonization east of the Elbe was accomplished, and it was in this fashion that the American West was won.

In many cases, large movements take on the form of streams which are highly specific both in origin and destination. For example, Italians from Sicily and southern Italy migrated chiefly to the United States and within the United States to a few northern cities, while high proportions of their countrymen from Lombardy and Tuscany went to South America and, in particular, to Buenos Aires. There are many examples of even more specific streams. Goldstein has noted that high proportions of Negroes resident in Norristown, Pennsylvania, in 1950 had come from Saluda, South Carolina, where a small contingent of Negroes had been recruited by the Pennsylvania Railroad as laborers and sent to Norristown during World War I.¹⁵ At the present time, a small stream of miners is proceeding from Appalachia to copper-mining centers in the West, and this movement has been paralleled in the past by the movement of British mechanics to New England and British potters to Ohio.

2. *For every major migration stream, a*

¹⁵ Sidney Goldstein, *Patterns of Mobility, 1910-1950: The Norristown Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), p. 38.

counterstream develops.—A counterstream is established for several reasons. One is that positive factors at origin may disappear, or be muted, as during a depression, or there may be a re-evaluation of the balance of positive and negative factors at origin and destination. The very existence of a migration stream creates contacts between origin and destination, and the acquisition of new attributes at destination, be they skills or wealth, often makes it possible to return to the origin on advantageous terms. Migrants become aware of opportunities at origin which were not previously exploited, or they may use their contacts in the new area to set up businesses in the old. Accompanying the returning migrants will be their children born at destination, and along with them will be people indigenous to the area of destination who have become aware of opportunities or amenities at the place of origin through stream migrants. Furthermore, not all persons who migrate intend to remain indefinitely at the place of destination. For example, many Italian immigrants to the United States intended to stay only long enough to make enough money to be comfortable in Italy.

3. *The efficiency of the stream (ratio of stream to counterstream or the net redistribution of population effected by the opposite flows) is high if the major factors in the development of a migration stream were minus factors at origin.*—Again, this point is so obvious that it hardly needs elaboration. Few of the Irish who fled famine conditions returned to Ireland, and few American Negroes return to the South.

4. *The efficiency of stream and counterstream tends to be low if origin and destination are similar.*—In this case, persons moving in opposing flows move largely for the same reasons and in effect cancel each other out.

5. *The efficiency of migration streams will be high if the intervening obstacles are great.*—Migrants who overcome a considerable set of intervening obstacles do so for compelling reasons, and such migrations are not undertaken lightly. To some

degree, the set of obstacles in stream and counterstream is the same, and return migrants are faced with the necessity of twice negotiating a nearly overwhelming set of obstacles. For example, migrants from Pennsylvania to California are deterred from returning by the very expense of the journey.

6. *The efficiency of a migration stream varies with economic conditions, being high in prosperous times and low in times of depression.*—During boom times the usual areas of destination, that is, the great centers of commerce and industry, expand rapidly, and relatively few persons, either return migrants or others, make the countermove. In times of depression, however, many migrants return to the area of origin, and others move toward the comparatively "safer" nonindustrialized areas. In extreme instances stream and counterstream may be reversed, as was the case with movement to and from rural areas during the worst years of the Great Depression. More recently, the mild recession in 1949 seems to have reversed the usual net flow from Oklahoma to California.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

1. *Migration is selective.*—This simply states that migrants are not a random sample of the population at origin. The reason why migration is selective is that persons respond differently to the sets of plus and minus factors at origin and at destination, have different abilities to overcome the intervening sets of obstacles, and differ from each other in terms of the personal factors discussed above. It would seem impossible, therefore, for migration not to be selective. The kind of selection, however, varies, being positive in some streams and negative in others. By positive selection is meant selection for migrants of high quality and by negative selection the reverse.

2. *Migrants responding primarily to plus factors at destination tend to be positively selected.*—These persons are under no necessity to migrate but do so because

they perceive opportunities from afar and they can weigh the advantages and disadvantages at origin and destination. For example, highly educated persons who are already comfortably situated frequently migrate because they receive better offers elsewhere. Professional and managerial people are also highly mobile, and often because migration means advancement.

3. *Migrants responding primarily to minus factors at origin tend to be negatively selected; or, where the minus factors are overwhelming to entire population groups, they may not be selected at all.*—Examples of the latter are political expulsions like that of the Germans from Poland and East Prussia or the Irish flight which followed the failure of the potato crop. On the whole, however, factors at origin operate most stringently against persons who in some way have failed economically or socially. Though there are conditions in many places which push out the unorthodox and the highly creative, it is more likely to be the uneducated or the disturbed who are forced to migrate.

4. *Taking all migrants together, selection tends to be bimodal.*—For any given origin, some of the migrants who leave are responding primarily to plus factors at destination and therefore tend to be positively selected, while others are responding to minus factors and therefore tend to be negatively selected. Therefore, if we plot characteristics of total migrants along a continuum ranging from poor to excellent, we often get a J-shaped or U-shaped curve. Such curves are found, for example, where the characteristic is either occupational class or education.

5. *The degree of positive selection increases with the difficulty of the intervening obstacles.*—Even though selection is negative or random at origin, intervening obstacles serve to weed out some of the weak or the incapable. Thus, the rigors of the voyage to America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries eliminated many of the weak, and the same kind of selection is apparent among the German refugees from eastern Europe during and after

World War II. It is also commonly noted that as distance of migration increases, the migrants become an increasingly superior group. At the other extreme, we have the milling-around in restricted areas of persons who, by any definition, are less capable; for example, uneducated slum dwellers often move round and round within a few-block radius. Such short distance movements were also characteristic of sharecroppers in the pre-World War II days in the United States.

6. *The heightened propensity to migrate at certain stages of the life cycle is important in the selection of migrants.*—To some degree, migration is a part of the *rites de passage*. Thus, persons who enter the labor force or get married tend to migrate from their parental home, while persons who are divorced or widowed also tend to move away. Since some of these events happen at quite well defined ages, they are important in shaping the curve of age selection. They are also important in establishing other types of selection—marital status or size of family, for example.

7. *The characteristics of migrants tend to be intermediate between the characteristics of the population at origin and the population at destination.*—Persons with different characteristics react differently to the balance of plus and minus factors at origin and destination. Even before they leave, migrants tend to have taken on some of the characteristics of the population at destination, but they can never completely lose some which they share with the population at origin. It is because they are already to some degree like the population at destination that they find certain positive factors there, and it is because they are unlike the population at origin that certain minus factors there warrant migration. Many studies have shown this intermediate relationship. The fertility of migrants, for example, tends to fall be-

tween that of the population at origin and the population at destination, and the education of migrants from rural areas, while greater than that of nonmigrants at origin, is less than that of the population at destination. Thus, we have one of the paradoxes of migration in that the movement of people may tend to lower the quality of population, as expressed in terms of some particular characteristic, at both origin and destination.

SUMMARY

In summary, a simple schema for migration has been elaborated, and from it certain hypotheses in regard to volume of migration, the establishment of stream and counterstream, and the characteristics of migrants have been formulated. The aim has been the construction of a related set of hypotheses within a general framework, and work is proceeding toward further development in regard to the assimilation of migrants and in regard to the effect upon gaining and losing areas.

Where possible, the hypotheses have been put in such form that they are immediately testable with current data. For others the necessary data are not now available, and others require restatement in terms of available data. It is to be expected that many exceptions will be found, since migration is a complex phenomenon and the often necessary simplifying condition—all other things being equal—is impossible to realize. Nevertheless, from what is now known about migration, encouraging agreement is found with the theory outlined in this paper. Full testing depends, of course, upon the amassing of materials from different cultures. Fortunately, recognition of the importance of internal migration in social and economic development has spurred research, and more and more countries publish detailed migration data from their censuses or population registers.