

REFUGEE, MIGRATION, DIASPORA

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Lecture 01

Lecture 01 : Introduction to Migration Studies

Thank you. Good morning and welcome to the lecture series on Refugee, Migration and Diaspora. So, today is going to be our first class of this course entitled Refugee, Migration, Diaspora and this is our introductory lecture on Migration Studies. We have to understand how Migration Studies actually developed its origin. The reason why it came up as a field of study and then its development, its journey and how it was internationalized, how it was institutionalized.

So, migration studies has developed as a distinct body of knowledge which delves on factors that precipitate the process of migration. That is how migration takes place and what are the consequences, what are the upshots of the process of migration in a broader sense? So, here we are looking at the reasons and the consequences of migration, how it affects, how it impacts, how migration impacts the migrants themselves. as well as the societies that are involved in migration. Migration studies can be intervened through the lens of several disciplines

such as literature, sociology, political science, anthropology, geography, law, as well as economics. So, there can be an interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach towards migration studies. Also, here we are looking at migration from a single, you know, perspective, as well as from plural points of view, plural intersecting lens. So, migration studies now in an increasing manner has expanded and gone on to capture or grasp a broader pool of disciplines including health humanities or health studies, development studies, governance studies as well as many other fields. So, migration studies is a broad and diverse research field which covers many different topics and numerous subfields of study.

These include the refugee studies, multicultural studies, race studies and diversity studies. How the process of migration can intercept or speak to the concept of race, the concept of

multiculturalism? and also a very important concept being discussed worldwide today, which is diversity and inclusion. So, migration studies include some crucial conceptualizations such as integration, multiculturalism, cohesion, and assimilation, right. So, we see

that there have been some recent as well as long-term political, economic, cultural, social, demographic and technological developments that have led to the hardening, the ossifying of nation-state borders. hardening of borders, these watertight boundaries have further led to an unparalleled level of human migration. So, the current era is marked by an unparalleled level of human migration. And these, you know, journey of people, these movements of humans from one nation state to another, from one geopolitical space to another is caused mainly by the recent and the long-standing developments. They could be developments in the political sense, in the economic sense, in the technological sense.

that drive people to shift their base from one country, from one nation state to another. So, at the beginning of the 21st century, the immigrant population stands at a historic high of 40 million, representing 12.9 percent of the total population. According to the estimation of the International Organization for Migration, which is a United Nations related organization working in the field of migration, in the year 2011, there were a total of 214 million migrants internationally and some 3.1% of the world's population were So, according to the IOM record, every one in 33 persons would be a refugee according to the 2011 estimate. In the recent modern history, migration has become a very common incident where people usually move from one geopolitical space to another in search of a better lifestyle.

And a better lifestyle includes better human facilities. It could be the medical facilities, access to education, employment. a better lifestyle as well as safeguarding of one's fundamental human rights under a current regime where they choose to move. So, reasons why people want to move from one part of the globe to another could be, you know, a sense of insecurity under a current regime.

It could be due to natural disasters. It could be due to ethnic cleansing because of being marginalized in terms of, you know, belonging to a particular race or community. It could be due to religious intolerance and so forth. So, all these factors together, you know, work or sometimes they work in isolation, triggering an individual or a group's decision to move, to journey from one point of the globe to another. So, Russell King is a critic

who speaks of migration studies as encompassing and I quote King here, "all types of international and internal migration, migrants and migration related diversities," unquote.

So, in the realm of migration studies, Robin Cohen develops nine conceptual dyads in order to understand the field in a holistic manner. So, what are some of the dyads that Cohen is talking about? individual versus contextual reasons to migrate and then rate versus incidence of migration, internal versus international migration, temporary versus permanent migration, settler versus labour migration, planned versus flight migration and Economic migrants versus political refugees, illegal versus legal migration, push versus pull factors. Migration studies is often recognized as having originated in the work of the geographer called Ernst Ravenstein in the late 19th century, that is 1880s.

And he is famous for his 11 laws of migration that came out in 1885. Ravenstein's work provides the foundation for for early, primarily the economic approaches to the study of migration and more specifically, Ravenstein's focus is on internal or domestic migration. So, the study of international migration and migrants can perhaps be traced back to Florian Zaniecki and William I. Thomas' work on Polish migration to Europe and America. Now, critics like Michael J. Greenwood and Gary L. Hunt provide a helpful overview of the early decades of migration research with a particular focus on America and the UK.

So, according to Michael J. Greenwood and Gary L. Hunt, migration research took off in the 1930s and they were catalyzed by two societal factors. One is urbanization and the other is the Great Depression. And These two factors together, urbanization and Great Depression, they generated an increased diversity in the field of migration studies. So, these two factors actually generated, they engendered an increased diversity in the field of migration studies.

So, we see that the first time we study the international as opposed to the internal migration studies, is in the light of post-war economic dynamics. And this is when we start understanding how the World Wars, particularly the World War I, has left in its trail a huge impact on the economics. of the world, across the world. This is when we no longer study migration only from the lens of or only through a Euro-American perspective, only through the lens of America and UK.

That's when perhaps a greater diversity and a greater momentum is attained by the field. And we see that a number of other countries, a number of other geographical areas also come into the scenario. They start playing a vital role. Now, the second shift was towards

the study of ethnic and race relations. And this happens against the backdrop of the civil rights movements in the 1970s decade.

So, we see that gradually this journey, the trajectory of the migration studies field is, you know, moving away basically from its Eurocentric or Euro-American centric origin and And going on to grasp the rest of the globe, which includes the colored people, which includes the people from other ethnicities, other race, backgrounds, other gender. And so it becomes a more diverse field, a more inclusive field. Because everything that civil rights movements was about, it wanted to talk about race, ethnicity of, you know, the rights of the other, the marginalized categories, right? And that's how we see that the ethnic and race relations come to play a vital role in the migration studies.

By the beginning of the 1990s, a qualitative turn linked more broadly to the cultural turn in the social sciences had taken place. To be more precise, migration studies broadly shifted its base from migration per se to reading, to examining the conditions of the migrants. In the 2000s, the expansion of migration studies accelerated further. So, one of the critical developments involved in the realm of migration studies after the 2000s was the shifting of a strong focus from the national dimension of migration and diversities to the understanding of migration as an international phenomenon. That is the journey from, you know, the internal migration, it is the shift of the field from

Studying only the internal migrations, migrations from, let us say, one state to another within the same nation to focusing on the international phenomenon, how and why there is a bulk of people that want to journey, that want to undertake migration. a rather long journey and leave their homeland, their native country and move to another part of the world, to another country. So the focus was shifting from the national dimension of migration or the internal migration and embracing a greater diversity, bringing into consideration other ethnicity, other race and the international phenomenon thereby, and the migrants as either being connected to the home or the host society. Here we see this concept of Bhabha's concept of third space also coming in, where the migrants actually posit a very dual, a very liminal kind of identity.

They have their part affiliation both with their home as well as with the host society. So, in a recent review of the field of migration studies, David Fitzgerald attempts a holistic quantitative mapping of the field in terms of its institutionalization and spatial relations of the emergent epistemic communities of interconnected scholars. how the scholars who are working on the field of migration, on the migration studies are, you know, how their

work actually connects with and speaks to one another because it does not remain a restricted limited field anymore. It has already been internationalized. So, works from different parts of the world are trying to connect the dots.

Now, through the ages, several scholars and academicians have tried to theorize the field of migration studies in order to understand it in a better manner. For example, E.G. Ravenstein's 1880s theorization of migration studies proposes the following. A. That migration decreases with the increasing distance. So, if a person wants to migrate, in all likelihood, he or she would like to migrate to a place that is closer to home.

That is the first preference. B, it occurs mainly towards the commercial and industrial sectors. If I want to leave my home, where would I like to stay? Relocate, the preference is given to a commercial or industrial area. That is where employment is higher.

C, most common form of migration is from rural to urban. So, people from rural area expecting better income and better jobs usually migrate to the urban areas. D, economic motives and technological advancements are the crucial factors promoting migration. Just like I said, why do one leave one's home behind and migrate to another place? Looking for better job, economic security and technological advancements, technologically developed city or better facilities.

So, Rammstein's proposals during the time frame of 1834 to 1913 include the following laws that A, every migration flow generates a return or counter migration. So, every time a bulk of people from a region actually moves from region A to region B, there is also fraction of the section that comes back to the point of origin, to region A. Perhaps because they could not find a job of their choice. Perhaps because the reality was not what they were expecting. They were expecting something better.

For several reasons, there is always a counter-migration of a section of people that had in the first place, you know, moved from their origin or their native country. Then we have the majority of migrants who move a short distance. They prefer to move to a locality, to a hub that is closer to home. Then migrants who move longer distances tend to choose big city destinations. If at all someone is leaving their home, their native place behind, they prefer to go to a bigger city with better opportunities, more facilities.

Urban residents are often less migratory than inhabitants of rural areas, right. So, usually the incentive for better living, more comfortable living with, you know, access to upward mobility in socio-economic terms increases. is available for rural migrants if they go and

resettle in the urban areas. So, this incentive of upward mobility is something that draws rural population to the urban areas. And then we have another factor, which is that entire families in most cases are less likely to make

international moves compared to the young adults. What we see is that some young members from a family usually cross the border or even move from urban to city rather than the entire family just selling off their home and moving their base for good. So what happens is that in most cases the young adults move from their source of origin from their native country or their native region and sometimes internationally or sometimes within the nation internally, they shift their base. It is less likely that the entire family would move its base for good.

So, the last point is that it is less likely that the entire family will shift its base either within the nation or internationally. Usually, it's the young adults that make international moves compared to, you know, moving with the entire family, selling of their homes, you know, shifting base for good or shifting base permanently. It's Usually, the family stays back to the native place, to the place of origin, whereas the young adults move their base in search of job or other opportunities.

Now, when we talk of different types of migration or the different models of migration, we have forced migration. What is forced migration? People may be displaced from their homes due to natural disasters, due to civil disturbances or wars. So, they did not plan to move, but the socio-economic, cultural circumstances were such that they were forced to move their base. If they remain in their home country, they are considered internally displaced people.

Sometimes, Due to these same reasons, it could be natural disaster such as a tsunami, right, or a flood. due to which an entire village of people have to shift their base to a neighboring village or they have to move to a neighboring district. It could be civil disturbances owing to the current political regime or it could be a civil war. Due to this, people either move internationally or they move to another place within the same country.

They are displaced internally within the same country. If they flee to another country, they may be seen as asylum seekers who can request shelters if their application is approved. So if there is a question of transcending the international border, then the question of seeking legal request, seeking request on pen and paper arises. And then, so we have something called internal migration.

People may move to a different administrative territory within their own national boundaries such as movements between states, provinces, cities or municipalities can take place. Next, we have economic migration. People may move to take advantage of economic opportunities such as new jobs. So, this can impact the demographic diversity of both the origin and the destination countries. Next, we have something called neoclassical migration models.

These models focus on the differences in wages and employment conditions and they discuss the migration costs and benefits. They view migration as an individual decision to maximize one's income or one could say so to maximize a better standard of living. So, a better standard of living. So, they view migration as an individual decision to maximize one's income or to better one's standard of living, right? So, here we look at the money that is involved in the process of migration, the money that is required to migrate from one point to another and further the benefits that one is reaping out of this investment.

Right. So that is something we study in the neoclassical migration models. The cost, the investment involved in migration and the benefits that one reap out of this investment, this venture. Next, we have something called the gravitational model of migration. Gravity model or gravitational model of migration developed by George Kinsley Zipf in 1946 is based on Newton's law of gravitation.

It is used to predict the degree of interaction between two places. So, gravity model of migration is a theory that uses two variables in order to estimate the volume of spatial interaction between two. It could be two cities, two regions or two counties and this model shows that the bigger and closer two places are, the more influence they are likely to have on each other. For example, a large city like New Delhi is likely to attract commuters from a large radius because of its size. But the further away someone is, the more likely they are to travel to other cities.

Right. So the migrants coming to Delhi, for example, to look for odd jobs, not a skilled, let's say an educated person with a particular degree or a particular skill, but a manual laborer. Where do the manual labourers come from in Delhi? So, from which regions do manual labourers mainly come to work in Delhi if they do not have a very strong academic background? In all likelihood, they mainly come from UP and Bihar because these states are closer to Delhi.

It is Less likely that someone from the southern part of India would come all the way to Delhi to find a manual laborer's job. They could find it better in one of the neighboring

states, right? So, the gravity model of migration is therefore based upon the idea that as the importance of one or both of the location increases, there will be an increase in movement between the two places. If we introduce something like a bullet train in India, it is likely to be between two very busy states, right?

Like Mumbai and Gujarat, because these are industrial hubs. They are commercial hubs and a lot of people are commuting daily. And so the trains, the utility of the train will be realized if it is running from two very busy and very important, you know, hubs such as Mumbai and Gujarat. So, this shows that the connectivity between two very busy and very important industrial and commercial hubs is likely to be. According to the location, their importance and their speaking to each other increases.

How they actually connect with each other increases because that is this connection between two important cities is going to be mutually beneficial, right? So, the farther apart the two locations are, however, the movement between them will be less. The farther apart the two locations are, the movement between them will be less. And this phenomenon is known as distance decay. The closer the two places are and further if both the places are very important in terms of commerce, in terms of economy,

industry, in terms of technological development, the likely it is that there will be more interaction, more movement between these two places. But if they are geographically farther away, then this commuting, this movement will likely decay and this is known as the distance decay. It will deter people to move from Chennai all the way to Delhi. Not many people will move from Chennai or Kerala all the way to Delhi, right? They will have a better choice among the close by states.

So, it also assumes that the more distance a migrant needs to overcome, the more difficulties and costs they have to pay or they have to face and that is what discourages them to choose a state that is geographically farther. Samuel A. Stouffer's law of intervening opportunities states, I quote Stouffer here, "the number of persons going going a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at that distance and inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities." So, in other words, put in plain words, Stauffer theorizes that the amount of migration over a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at the place of destination. So, the more likely a person is going to choose

a destination is directly proportional to how much or how many opportunities are present in the destination. And further, it is inversely proportional to the number of opportunities

between the places of departure and the place of destination. So, between Delhi and Madras, if there is another city that is giving me An equivalent opportunity, why would I travel all the way to Delhi? I would choose an intermediary state, something that is closer to my home.

If it is closer to Chennai, then I will prefer to travel there. Perhaps I would prefer to travel to Bangalore or to Bombay rather than all the way to Delhi if an equivalent opportunity is given me to a state that is closer to home. So, these intervening opportunities may persuade a migrant to settle in a place in the route rather than proceeding to the originally planned destination, right? So, Stauffer argues that the volume of migration has less to do with distance and population than with the opportunities at each location. In 1958, William Peterson published a work called A General Typology of Migration in the American Sociological Review, which divided migration into five classes and two types.

So, according to Peterson's typology, it divided migration into five classes. What are these five classes of migration? Primitive, impelled, forced, free and mass migration. Further, each of these five classes was subdivided into two types. So, for example, primitive class of migration would be further subdivided into conservative migration and then innovative migration, similar with impelled force, free and mass migration.

So, what is conservative migration? Conservative migration is the one in which the mover changes residence to maintain his present standard of living. On the other hand, the innovative migration is propelled by the desire to improve one's living standards. We would stop our lecture here today and let us discuss further in our next lecture. Thank you.