

# **REFUGEE, MIGRATION, DIASPORA**

**Prof. Sarbani Banerjee**

**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, English**

**Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee**

**Lecture 06**

## **Lecture 06: Immigration and Integration**

Thank you. Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on refugees, migration, and diaspora. So, today we are going to discuss immigration and integration. So, when understanding immigration and integration, we need to discuss the melting pot and the salad bowl metaphors that have been frequently used to understand how immigrant groups should interact with the host society.

There are these two traditional metaphors that have been recurrently brought into discussion. The melting pot and salad bowl metaphors are central to discussions around immigration and cultural integration. They represent two contrasting views on how migrant groups are expected to interact with the dominant culture or the host societies. So these two metaphors are used in order to frame the broader debates about whether assimilation or multiculturalism is more desirable and viable in the case where people coming from different backgrounds have to coexist within a particular social framework.

So, when we talk about assimilation, we are thinking of the idea that migrants should adopt the culture of the host society. And on the other hand, when we are talking about multiculturalism, we are thinking about the idea that migrants should retain their cultural distinctiveness while integrating with the host society. The melting pot and salad bowl metaphors highlight the philosophical and practical tension between assimilation and multiculturalism. In practice, most countries navigate a middle path between these two models, balancing unity with diversity in different ways depending on their particular historical context, political climate, as well as social needs. The melting pot metaphor became widely popular in the United States in the early 20th century.

It was particularly promoted by scholars such as Israel Zangwill, who coined the term 'melting pot' in his 1908 play titled *The Melting Pot*. The idea was to portray the US as a country where various immigrant groups could blend into a singular American identity. In this vision, assimilation was seen as a positive outcome where individuals could fully

integrate into society by shedding their old cultural practices in favor of new ones. The model of the melting pot was often favored by those who believed that a strong national identity could only be formed if immigrants conformed to the societal norms, certain standardized societal norms of the host society. In the early 20th century, immigrants from Europe were often expected to assimilate into mainstream American culture, and this was reflected in policies that encouraged English language acquisition and the adoption of American cultural norms, often at the expense of expunging one's heritage.

The salad bowl metaphor emerged as a challenge, a counter rhetoric, or a counter theory to the melting pot model, and it gained prominence in the second half of the 20th century, particularly with the rise of multiculturalism as a policy in countries such as Canada and the UK. Scholars like Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor have been central to the development of multiculturalism as a theoretical and policy approach. Will Kymlicka, particularly in his 1995 book *Multicultural Citizenship*, argues that liberal democracies should accommodate minority groups' cultural rights and render them visible and legitimate status. The salad bowl metaphor is associated with more pluralistic societies where diversity is not only tolerated but actually celebrated. Multiculturalism promotes the idea that immigrants should be able to maintain their cultural traditions and languages while participating fully in the wider society.

In this view, cultural differences are seen as a strength that contributes to diversity rather than something that must be erased. Kymlicka, in particular, argues that societies should recognize and accommodate cultural diversity rather than insist on the assimilation of minority cultures. Kymlicka contends that immigrants and ethnic minorities should not only have individual rights but also collective rights to preserve and promote their cultural traditions. As we explore the complex phenomenon of immigration and how immigrants navigate their identities in relation to their home and host countries, we also examine how transnationalism challenges traditional notions of assimilation, citizenship, and belonging. So, the transnational theory suggests that instead of migrants fully integrating into one particular culture,

Be it, you know, complete loyalty towards one's home culture or complete integration and assimilation with the host culture. They rather engage in bidirectional connections. They engage through bidirectional connections, which allow them to simultaneously be a part of both the host and home societies. This engagement is not just a personal, individual process, but a social and political one as well, with migrants maintaining ongoing ties to their countries of origin, while also navigating the complexities,

possibilities, and opportunities that life has to provide in their host country. Transnationalism is often linked to the dual engagement in both the host and home countries.

This engagement can include sending remittances back to one's home country, to one's family in the home country. Participating in the political life of both the home and the host country through voting and activism, maintaining family and cultural ties in both places, and even returning to the home country for extended periods. The intersection of transnationalism, immigration, and integration is a critical area of study towards understanding the complexities of migration and diaspora. So, these concepts deal with the movement of people, the preservation of cultural ties across borders, as well as the ways in which migrants interact with and adapt to their host societies. When discussing immigration, we typically refer to the movement of individuals from one country to another for various reasons, which include economic opportunities,

Conflict back in their home country, seeking better education, as well as political asylum when there is a case of political unrest in one's home country. So, integration, on the other hand, refers to how immigrants adapt to and become part of their host society. Traditionally, the model of integration was aligned with assimilation, where migrants were expected to shed their cultural markers in favor of blending into the national culture of the host society. This was often seen as a linear process where the foreign identity is replaced by the national one. Often with a framework of the melting pot ideology.

So, traditionally, assimilation is deemed as complete only when all traces of one's home culture or home country's identity are expunged, are obliterated, and an individual becomes unilaterally one with the American culture, Euro-American culture, which has been considered traditionally as a successful case of assimilation. However, in practice, we see that transnational communities operate within multiple national frameworks simultaneously, redefining more definitive concepts of citizenship and belonging. The acculturation framework developed by John Berry is indeed one of the most widely used models for understanding how individuals navigate cultural change and adaptation in a new society. And such acculturation, such shift or navigation, is not necessarily unilateral or unidirectional in nature.

It can be multifarious. It can take place at multiple levels. And the changes, the transformations in an individual after migration, can be basically through ramified experiences, you know, diverse experiences. Berry's bidimensional model captures the

complex interaction between two key factors. One is the desire to retain one's heritage culture, and the next is the desire to participate in the larger society.

So, these two factors actually come together in shaping an individual's experiences, which can be variegated in nature. Berry's model highlights the complexity of acculturation processes and suggests that individuals may vary greatly in how they negotiate the dual pressures of maintaining their cultural heritage and also integrating into the larger society. Now, Nina Glick-Schiller's work on transnationalism emphasizes that migration is a multidirectional and multilayered phenomenon. In her work titled 'Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration.' Nina Glick-Schiller was the director of the Cosmopolitan Cultures Institute at the University of Manchester, and she was previously a professor of anthropology at the University of New Hampshire.

A prominent scholar on migration, transnationalism, and diasporic connections, Shiller authored over 80 articles and chapters as well as three books. Her research offers a fresh perspective on nation-state models of integration by focusing on how immigrants sustain social, economic, and political connections across borders. According to Glick-Schiller, transnationalism is not just about migration. But it also entails the ongoing relationships and social fields that emerge between migrants, their families, and the communities both in their home and host countries. These fields, all these different social fields or factors, include the financial exchanges or remittances, family networks, and political activities which continue even after the migrations.

So, to quote from Schiller, I quote her at length, 'Transnational social fields are in part shaped by the migrants' perceptions that they must keep their options open.' In the globalized economy that has developed over the past several decades, there is a sense that no one place is truly secure, although people do have access to many places. One way migrants keep options open is to continuously translate the economic and social position gained in one political setting into political, social, and economic capital in another. Schiller's work suggests that migrants can have hybrid forms of citizenship where they are members of both the host country and the country of their origin. So this kind of theory challenges the traditional idea that citizenship is singular and fixed, thereby offering a more fluid understanding of national belonging, and such an understanding, such a hybrid understanding through the lens of transnationalism.

It does not let or does not compel an individual to forego one citizenship or one belonging in order to adopt or in order to embrace another. Right. So Glick-Schiller argues that immigrants and refugees are often engaged in hybrid identity formation, which is a process of incorporating multiple cultural influences and identities. According to Glick-Schiller, I quote, 'A focus on transnationalism as a new field of social relations will allow us to explore transnational fields of action and meaning as operating within and between continuing nation states and a reaction to the conditions and terms nation states impose on their populations,' unquote.

So, like I said, a transnational individual does not shape in a definitive, predictable way, but his or her transformation is incumbent on the two nations' policies, the two nations that are involved in forming his or her identity. So, the terms and conditions of the nation-states' the home country and the host country, the treatment meted out by the immediate environment as well as the treatment that one receives back from the home country, all these factors actually, the different social relations. The different social factors actually influence how one becomes, what one becomes. So, in the crossroads of all these factors, in the interface, in the nexus of all these factors, you know, the host country's policies, the home country's, you know, terms and conditions for, you know, an NRI person, for example, all these factors form a nexus.

They form the field of social relations that shape the experiences of a transnational individual. So, Arjun Appadurai's work, *Modernity at Large*, highlights the role of globalization in reshaping cultural identities, particularly in the context of migration. Appadurai emphasizes that globalization creates new spaces for identity formation that are no longer confined to any one or even several nation-states. Appadurai uses the idea of landscapes in order to describe the five key global flows which shape the world of the modern post-national individual. These flows include ethnoscaping or the movement of people, mediascaping or the spread of information through media, technoscaping or the global exchange of technology, finanscaping referring to the movement of money and capital, and ideoscaping or the spread of ideas and ideologies.

Appadurai introduces the concept of ethnoscaping. Referring to the fluid movement of people across borders that creates new diasporic communities. According to Arjun Appadurai, I quote, 'the landscapes of group identity, the ethnoscaping around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects.' Insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, specially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous.' For immigrants and refugees, these ethnoscaping challenge the notion of

fixed identities tied to any one nation and instead allow for the emergence of transnational identities.

What is more, Appadurai discusses the concept of cultural imaginaries, or the ways in which people imagine their connections to other places and cultures. So, according to Appadurai, a new global public sphere is emerging, and to an extent, it has already emerged, where social imaginaries are increasingly disconnected from the territorial limits of nation-states. They are, they kind of take off from the territorial limits. They are not really bound to, or they do not speak to, the limits of the nation-states. Just like capital and media, nations themselves are becoming more diasporic and fluid.

So, the nation, the concept of the national community, the concept of a particular culture, heritage, or history bound to one nation, is also flowing here. It is no longer kind of fixed to a territory. People move out of a territorial limit, and they carry this history and culture with them. And alongside the ethnoscape, the culturescape is also kind of mutating. It is also transforming and becoming something else.

So, in this regard, we see Aihwa Ong critiquing the traditional migration studies framework, which often conceptualizes migration as a one-way movement from peripheral or developing countries to the core or developed countries, typically referring here to the United States and also to other European nations. So, Ong critiques the model inspired by Arjun Appadurai's work, *Modernity at Large*, which focuses on the idea of cultural globalization creating virtual neighborhoods. Appadurai's concept suggests that technology and media enable people to connect globally, creating a world where physical borders and distances become less and less important. While this underlines the global interconnectedness of individuals, Ong would further point out that it does not consider the unequal distribution of mobility. So, this is where Ong's critique of Appadurai comes in.

Ong suggests that not everyone has the same ability to move or access global networks. The concept of a virtual neighborhood tends to treat or at least assumes that all people have equal mobility and connectedness. However, such an assumption has a basic flaw or a basic lapse because it ignores how power and privilege can actually shape one's access to mobility. Not all individuals across all classes and across the spectrum of socioeconomic privileges and access can have the same kind of mobility.

Mobility entails, you know, cultural and economic capital. So when we are talking about a concept such as a virtual neighborhood as proposed by Arjun Appadurai, it can be felt;

it is a phenomenon that can be experienced within the limits of certain cultural, social, and economic conditions. So there has to be a certain privileged lens for experiencing a virtual neighborhood. Someone coming from a less privileged background may not be able to, you know, associate or immediately identify with this kind of concept.

Because such a person does not have the monetary resources to be as mobile as his or her privileged counterpart, right. So, Aihwa Ong's concept of flexible citizenship, as discussed in the work titled *Flexible Citizenship*, builds on ideas of transnationalism And it examines how migrants, especially elite migrants, navigate the global landscape of nation-states and their varying political, economic, and social opportunities. So opportunities expand as one's mobility increases and one's access increases. To different options, you know, access to different cultural knowledge or cultural systems becomes easier.

So, the greater access one has to different nations, cultures, different nations, cultural repertoire, and knowledge, the more one becomes kind of So, what Ong is trying to point out here is that with greater cultural and economic access, mobility increases, and the more mobility an individual has, he or she is exposed to more and more social, political, and economic opportunities. So, mobility opens up new avenues in terms of one's understanding, one's access to different knowledge systems, different cultural repertoires, and so forth. So, the theory of flexible citizenship explores how wealthy people

as well as highly skilled migrants often acquire multiple citizenships and thereby take advantage of different immigration policies, social services, and economic opportunities across countries. They have Actually, the advantage of getting access to different opportunities, be it social services, be it economic advantages or possibilities, they have these different pathways through which they can grow. They can grow through their flexible citizenship, through their multiple citizenship. So, this whole idea of multiple citizenship or flexible citizenship, as well as virtual neighborhood, these two concepts, one by Aihwa Ong, the other by Arjun Appadurai, they definitely have a class angle.

Not all people can take advantage of flexible citizenship or experience this phenomenon called virtual neighborhood, right? So, this fluid approach to citizenship reflects a globalized era where transnational individuals can exploit the borders of nation-states in order to maximize their life chances and opportunities. These opportunities are not readily and not always available or accessible to people across the entire socioeconomic spectrum. So, Ong's work highlights how globalization allows people to adopt

multicultural identities, thereby negotiating between multiple cultural contexts. So, their own identities are formed through the nexus of all these different cultural realities, different cultural phenomena.

And their own identities are constantly being shaped at the interface of these different realities, these different cultural contexts. Migrants who engage with flexible citizenship are not just navigating borders for economic or political reasons, but they are also shaped by multiple cultural and political ideologies. This is something I have been trying to explain throughout this lecture session. So, in conclusion, the complex dynamics of immigration and integration are shaped by a wide array of theories. Policies and societal attitudes, which vary across time and space.

The concepts of assimilation, multiculturalism, and transnationalism reflect the ongoing tension between cultural unity and diversity, and each offers unique insights into how societies and immigrants navigate the challenges of belonging, identity, and social cohesion. As a way of concluding our discussion today, we see that as migration continues to be a defining feature of the globalized world, it brings with it both challenges as well as opportunities for individuals, communities, and nations alike. With this, we come to the end of our lecture today. Let us meet with a new topic in our next lecture. Thank you.