

The Psychology of Migration

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The growth of knowledge within a field of research often depends upon the type of researchers involved, their interests and their educational background. This point is very clearly illustrated in the case of migration research. Studies on population mobility can be independently conducted within the framework of ten different areas of discipline at the university level. Consequently, the research field lies at the cross-roads between many specialized disciplines. This makes it possible for researchers to examine a large number of perspectives with the aim of illustrating the way in which migrations take place.

Nevertheless, migration studies are traditionally set in terms of three specialized fields: research in economics, cultural geography and demography. Very simply speaking, economists are primarily interested in the way in which migrations operate as sources of manpower. However, they are especially interested in the way in which migrations react to fluctuations in business cycles. Economists have also analyzed the ways in which migrations affect trade and industry in the areas of origin and the receiving regions. Historical research has concentrated to a great extent on the population transfer caused by the process of industrialization.

The chief interest of geographers in this context has been the cartographical study of migration patterns. The central object of study is the distance and direction of these migrations. The interplay between densely populated areas and their adjacent regions together with the significant redistribution of the population have also been matters for discussion in many geographical studies. Such studies can actually be classified under one particular heading, namely the different aspects of urbanization.

In its modern phase, this process of urbanization began toward the middle of the nineteenth century. Consequently, research conducted by geographers in this field also assumes an historical nature.

For demographers in this field migration is one of the few essential factors which affects the development and composition of a population. The inherent changes in population which are normally dictated by nativity and mortality can be disrupted as a result of intensive transfers of population over the boundaries of an administrative area. In this context emigration and immigration are naturally of particular importance.

Economists, geographers and demographers have provided a rather stable groundwork for subsequent research. Summarizing very briefly, we can state that the relationship between business cycles and migrations is a very obvious phenomenon. This has even been demonstrated by research connected with situations in Sweden. As early as the 1920s, Henry Jerome drew the decisive conclusion from studies of the great transatlantic migrations that emigration was highly sensitive to changes in the North American labor market. Since then these observations have been refined in terms of a so-called push and pull model, in which attention is also given to the economy of the receiving countries.

In turn, geographers have called attention to the fact that migration appears to have its own type of inner mechanism and patterned system of laws. Distance is a factor of especial significance. The population transfer which takes place between one particular area and its immediate surroundings is greatest in terms of migrations over short distances. This trend rapidly diminishes in line with the distance from the area in question. On the other hand, there is a greater degree of irregularity in the direction taken by these migrations. This of course reflects economic and social differences as well as those of natural geography between various sectors within the area of migration. But several studies have shown that even the direction taken by migrations has remained surprisingly constant over a long period of time.

The purely demographic type of migration research has primarily emphasized the way in which migratory movements often cause dramatic changes in a population. So-called cohort studies provide researchers with a superior means of analysis when it comes to

studying such phenomena as the behavioral patterns and varying experiences of different age groups over a set period of time. In this way the researcher can capture the complicated power-play between different tendencies within every major population. Migration studies adapt themselves particularly well to this type of analysis, although in most countries it proves difficult to apply this analysis because of insufficient data on migrations by individual persons.

Despite these handicaps, research has been able to register results. Working on the basis of a rather unwieldy set of material from American sources, a research group under the direction of Dorothy Swaine Thomas at the Population Studies Center in Philadelphia has succeeded in confirming a rather uniform need for migration within a long series of generations, beginning in the 1870s and extending into the future. It is interesting to find that a generation which enters the labor market under unfavorable circumstances, for example in connection with the Depression around 1930, appears to compensate for the lack of possibilities for work by means of relatively extensive migratory movements at a later phase in the life cycle.

There is much which needs to be done within the traditional framework of migration research and its more mechanical models of interpretation. A great many technical problems are still unsolved, and some have only been partly mastered. However, the trend in model building which is sweeping over many disciplines at the moment does look promising. But even here there are difficulties, especially in terms of measuring and converting those variables which carry the most weight of interest.

A certain degree of technical shortcoming is a common feature of practically all research. But what is more a matter for concern here is the preoccupation of researchers with people in a migratory situation and the rationalistic outlook these researchers employ in approaching this material. This type of outlook has almost entirely dominated the traditional line of research which has been outlined above. It is perhaps for this reason that one can venture to predict the following development: further progress in this field will primarily be made possible by a generation of researchers which directs its energies more in the direction of humanistic studies and the behavioral sciences.

The deficiencies we face at the present time can create a tremendous

amount of problems, and for the historical aspect of migration research this proves no exception. We actually know relatively little about the ways in which many people reacted to the major processes of adjustment over the last hundred years. Thus, it is all the more rewarding when new research findings are produced which at least partly illustrate the way in which the individual person has responded to such impulses as industrialization and urbanization. In the following pages I will present several examples of this type of research.

It almost goes without saying that the founding of an industry with a large number of job opportunities will have strong repercussions on available "manpower," particularly within an area which is dominated by agriculture and is largely free of competitive industry. However, in his doctoral dissertation entitled *Emigration, folkomflyttning och sasongarbete i södra Hälsingland 1865—1910* (Emigration, population transfer and seasonal labor in southern Hälsingland, 1865—1910) Bjorn Rondahl has convincingly shown that this theory does not hold in all situations. In the course of an intensive in-depth study of the lumber industry in Ljusne and the densely populated Söderala district, Rondahl discovered a very insignificant degree of population transfer over short distances. The contacts have apparently been so limited that Rondahl finds it legitimate to speak in terms of a *rural-industrial* barrier. He has also succeeded in reinforcing his results on the basis of several unpublished seminar papers which deal with the opening phases of industrialization in several parishes in Jämtland and Medelpad. What we can register here, then, is the reluctance of an agricultural population to move into the industrial areas at an early stage of the industrialization process. The fact that this resistance almost entirely crumbles later on falls in line with Rondahl's thesis.

But where did the saw mills find their source of manpower? Rondahl was able to respond in detail to this question by making expert use of the old account records of the Ljusne-Woxna Company. The answer was something of a sensation. Up to that point we had well established the fact that a good many so-called migrant workers came from Dalarna, Varmland and other provinces to take on seasonal labor in the Norrland forests and saw mills. However, we did not have any idea as to the size of these seasonal migrations. Rondahl

has now shown that more than half of the workers in the industry under study were recruited from among migrant workers and that in certain years during the 1879's even up to 70—75 % of the labor force consisted of such seasonal manpower.

These migrations by seasonal workers also led to in-migration from their respective areas of origin, although Rondahl warns against our overestimating the proportions involved. We also find a significant mobility in population among the rapidly expanding saw mill settlements along the coastal areas in Norrland. Although this in-migration originated from agricultural regions, it was largely characterized by movements of entire families.

The situation described above represents a first phase of population transfer for the lumber industry regions. Rondahl draws a distinction between two subsequent phases during the period covered in his study. The intermediate phase is characterized by the following development: there is a sharp growth in the relative importance of the net in-migration for the saw mills, while at the same time the roll played by the migration of seasonal workers diminishes in importance. Moreover, this phase sees the rise of a certain individual recruitment of manpower to industry by the workers themselves: this was the consequence of the rapid rate of family building and the high nativity during the preceding phase. The third and more "mature" phase of development is characterized by individual contract of labor, significantly reduced net in-migration and insignificant numbers of seasonal work migrations.

The emigration from this region was especially strong during the transition between the first two phases as well as toward the end of the third. Rondahl sets the first peak of emigration in connection with the crisis in the saw mill industry in 1879. At this point Rondahl's analysis becomes very traditional and one-sided. What is interesting in this context is that the emigration continued unabated even after the crisis was over and wage conditions were considerably improved. This probably reflects a delayed reaction among saw mill workers and their families. In any case, Rondahl has not given an entirely sufficient amount of attention to the situation of adjustment in this rapidly expanding lumber industry. We must sharpen this focus and attempt to explain the phenomenon which a straightforward analysis of the labor market cannot shed light on, namely

that emigration reaches a peak during the most expansive period of the lumber industry.

With respect to the large waves of emigration which took place in 1906, it is fairly easy to find an explanation in the static growth of the lumber industry. But Rondahl has not stopped at this. He has succeeded in elucidating a dramatic, psychological form of warfare between the company management in Ljusne and the organized core of workers. The conflict concerned the workers' right to unionize, and for many of the workers involved in this struggle it ended with emigration to America. Those who were the most politically active bore the brunt of the burden, and faced with the threat of being blacklisted, simply left the Swedish labor market.

The same resistance to a definite rupture with respective areas of origin, which we find among Rondahl's migrant workers, is also documented among emigrants to America and Canada in Lars-Goran Tedebrand's dissertation, *Västernorrland och Nordamerika 1875—1913* (Western Norrland and North America, 1875—1913). Tedebrand is the first European researcher who has succeeded in conducting a comprehensive study of re-immigration to Sweden from North America based on reliable statistics. Previous studies from Italy and Greece have been rather impressionistic and fragmentary in terms of empirical data, Tedebrand is quick in delivering a death-blow to the old notion that many re-immigrants to Sweden returned with private fortunes. The majority of them had only spent a few years in America. Only in exceptional cases had they spent sufficient time in America in which to establish themselves and manage to assemble a considerable amount of capital. Tedebrand is of the opinion that the great waves of re-immigration during and after the 1890s must be characterized to some considerable degree as a step in the direction toward a transatlantic migration by working people. There is much which supports this interpretation. One important factor confirmed by Tedebrand's findings is the large scale re-immigration of former emigrants to their old places of residence in Sweden.

This is another case in which the migrants appear to have behaved less rationally than one might have expected them to. Even if their presence on the larger American labor market was short-lived, the experience ought to have given re-immigrants the will and desire to seek new possibilities upon their return to Sweden. In the long run

this has not been the case, at least in those instances where Tedébrand has succeeded in making a more in-depth analysis.

Tedebrand has conducted a detailed analysis of the migration pattern for parishes in Western Norrland with various levels of industrialization. He has especially devoted attention to the social and economic consequences stemming from the acquisition of timberland by lumber industries in this province. Tedebrand's penetrative analysis of the labor market in this context is of lesser interest here. We are more interested in seeing that the economic analysis is supplemented by observations on the formation of families in the Sundsvall district. Furthermore, we want to see the re-emergence of the rural-industrial barrier. The farmers who sold their forests and homes to the lumber corporations were not attracted by the scores of job opportunities waiting for them at the saw mills in the Sundsvall district. They chose instead to begin a new life as farmers in America and Canada. At the same time workers in the Sundsvall district were emigrating to the lumber industries in America, particularly those in Michigan. Tedebrand has succeeded in documenting this fact by means of source material which has been little utilized by previous research, namely the passenger lists of transatlantic shipping companies. This material provides information on the emigrants' places of destination in the receiving countries. In other words, it appears as if it was impossible for people to get away from the barrier between agriculture and industry even by resorting to transatlantic migration.

It will be exciting to see just how far one can generalize from Rondahl's and Tedebrand's findings. There is an interesting parallel to the stubborn reaction of the agricultural population to the industrialization process. This can be found with reference to the fact that the nativity rate was extremely slow in adjusting itself to the new level of mortality at the 'end of the 1880s. This factor should indicate that the term "rural-industrial barrier" is here to stay. It should also indicate that historians of migration research will be more inclined in the future to experiment with new and less orthodox perspectives and approaches to the material they are working with.

Swedish Books, recently published in the field of American culture

Geography and Travel

Arfwedson, Carl David: *The United States and Canada in 1832, 1833, and 1834*. With a new introduction by Marvin Fisher. Series in American Studies. New York and London 1969.

Bolin, Johan: *Beskrifning öfwer Nord-Amerikas förenta stater. Med naturhistoriska och andra underrättelser, jemfö särskilda upplysningar och råd fir dem som wilja dit inflytta*. (Description of the United States of North America. With advice and information for emigrants.) Förord av Vilhelm Moberg. 364 s. Svecica rediviva 15. Nordiska bokhandeln. 1970.

Kalm, Pehr: *Resejournal over resan till norra Amerika*. (Diary of the journey to North America.) Del 2. Utg. av Martti Kerkkonen, John E. Roos. 466 s. 311. Skrifter utg. av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 436. Helsingfors 1970.

Karlström, Birgitta & Bo: *New York, en o i USA. Intryck och praktiska råd*. (New York, an island in the USA. Impressions and practical advice.) 167 s. Ill. Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm 1970.

Lindahl, Mac & Lindahl, Turid: *Första gngen i New York*. (The first time in New York.) 95 s. Ill. Aldus/Bonnier. Stockholm 1971.

Mattson, Hans: *Den nya svenska kolonien i Minnesota, Nord-Amerika. Goda land fir emigranter, på de billigaste villkor vid Lake Superior jernbanan*. (The new Swedish colony in Minnesota, North America. Good land for emigrants, on very good conditions at

the Lake Superior railway.) 41 s. Rediviva. Stockholm 1970.

Modie, Peter & Moen, Jan: *Utblick över Förenta Staterna*. (Outlook over the United States.) 80 s. Ill. Läromedelsförlaget, Stockholm 1970.

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USA. Av Lars Hildingson. 78 s. Ill. Natur och kultur. Stockholm 1970.

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- Tedebrand, Lars-Goran: Västernorrland och Nordamerika 1875—1913. Utvandring och Iterinvandring. (Western Norrland and North America 1875—1913. Emigration and Re-immigration.) 341 s. *Studia historica Upsaliensia* 42. Uppsala 1972.
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- Söderström, Ingvar: Joe Hill, diktare och agitator. (Joe Hill, poet and agitator.) 140 s. Ill. Prisma. Stockholm 1970.
- Widen, Albin: Amandus Johnson, svenskamerikan. En levnadsteckning. (Amandus Johnson, Swedish-American. A biography.) Med företal av Prins Bertil. 250 s. Ill. Norstedts. Stockholm 1970.
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