[1–2021]
history – theory – criticism

dějiny–teorie–kritika

[1–2021]
Fakulta
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THE RISKY BUSINESS OF MIGRATION

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO DECISION MAKING AND RISK IN THE STUDY OF MIGRATION

William O'Reilly

This article reviews the research strategies employed by historians, economists, political scientists, and others when assessing human movement both at present and in the past. Migration systems are replete with long-established migration paths as well as anomalous events. Yet historians regularly fail to engage with questions of motivation for migration, how migrants reach a decision on when and where to go, how agents and agencies of migration aid or inhibit efforts to relocate, and how risk is a significant factor in decision making regarding migration. This article critically reviews a range of approaches from other disciplines and assesses the value for historians of considering a range of theories concerning risk and risk management in assessing how migrants in the past – and today – make the decision to uproot. This study is a contribution to the historiography of migration studies and calls for historians to approach the history of human movement in a more interdisciplinary way.

Keywords: historiography of migration studies, migration risks, interdisciplinary migration history, decision making

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Introduction

In early 1746, a young David Hume was winding his way from Hertfordshire, England, to Scotland when he encountered a distant relation, General James St Clair.[1] St Clair was, at that time, organizing a venture to Canada and proposed to David Hume that he join him as secretary in his expedition. Hume, swept up with the thought of this 'Romantic Adventure', reflected at Portsmouth on what his future in America would be like: he would first spend the winter in Boston, before leaving for Canada, where he could become a distinguished army officer.[2]

But destiny –or more accurately very poor planning for the voyage– intervened. General St Clair's expedition was 'detain'd in the Channel, till it was too late to go to America'. In Hume's words, his cousin the General was 'without intelligence, without pilots, without guides, without any map of the country to which he was bound, except a common map, on a small scale, of the kingdom of France.' Even then, knowledge of what lay ahead for the migrants seemed limited: when the ship's officers were asked what they knew of the French coast, they responded, Hume wrote, 'as if the question had been with regard to the coast of Japan or of California'.[3] Hume became violently seasick, reluctantly crossed the Channel to France, then on to southern Ireland and back to England. On account of the poor planning of his 'ignorant' cousin, and even more because of Hume's own failure to seek out information about the voyage, about the experience he could expect as a migrant, Hume never made it to America to seek his fortune in the army. Instead, as a failed migrant, he remained in England and began work on *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

This story of the young David Hume is interesting not least because it recounts a little-known aspect in the great economist, essayist, historian and philosopher's biography, but because it causes one to question, would this aspiring emigrant have ever ventured to sea, if he had known just how poorly prepared he, his uncle and the ship's crew were for the journey? Would he have ventured to sea at all, if he had realized that the crew knew precious little about their route? Would he

1 EMMA ROTHSCHILD, *David Hume and the Seagods of the Atlantic*, in: The Atlantic Enlightenment, (eds.) Susan Manning, Francis D. Cogliano, Aldershot-Burlington 2008, pp. 81–96, p. 83.

2 DAVID HUME, *Procur[ing] at First a Company in an American Regiment, by the Choice of the Colonies*, in: New Letters of David Hume, (eds.) Raymond Klibansky, Ernest C. Mossner, Oxford 2011 (1954), p. 20.

3 Hume failed to cross the Atlantic as he had planned. E. ROTHSCHILD, *David Hume and the Seagods of the Atlantic*, p. 86.

even have ventured south into England, and not north into Scotland as he first planned, if he had thought his emigrant path would have been foiled by a lack of knowledge and a lack of preparedness for the risky business of migration?

In many ways, David Hume's story stands for the stories of the millions of migrants who uprooted and emigrated in the past, and who emigrate today, too.[4] While the stories of the overwhelming majority of those migrants in history are little known, and while their experiences may vary considerably from place to place, what remains consistent in all stories of migration is that at a given point, every individual or group must reflect on the merits of their proposed action and in assessing their options, then decide to commit to becoming a migrant, or not. And in reaching that decision, a migrant must weigh up what they know against what they do not; assess the riskiness of their venture, the uncertainty of the outcome, and justify their decision. Decision making, knowledge and non-knowledge play a critical part in making a migrant.[5] Yet as historians, we rarely think of the history of migration in the contexts of sociological, economic and scientific (principally within the sub-disciplines of biology and ecology) theorizing on decision making, on risk, and on knowledge. This article calls for historians, in particular, to consider research findings in a range of disciplines on the subjects of decision making, risk and network theory, and to reflect on how we can draw on this research in our work on migrants and migration in the past. This study focusses on a comparative and model-oriented approach and encourages histo-

4 The language of botany was, most especially, used by contemporaries in the early modern period when writing about migration; and to create a distinction between native and newcomer. In English, 'plantation' was the dominant analogy used to explain the colony and the emigrant community. In the Elizabethan period, the beehive was also referenced as a model for order in society and for the potential to lift-up and relocate a hive of colonists. See, *inter alia*, 'Endorsed by both ancient wisdom and nature, the hive seemed to offer a perfect model for colonisation. Just as bees swarmed from the overfull hive, English men and women should leave England, groaning under its heavy burden of overpopulation, for the good of the commonwealth.' KAREN ORDAHL KUPPERMANN, *The Beehive as a Model for Colonial Design*, in: eadem. (ed.), America in European Consciousness 1493–1750, Chapel Hill-London 1995, pp. 272–292: p. 273. The hive, *matica*, is a familiar analogy in Central Europe; CHRISTER PETLEY, *Plantations in the Atlantic World*, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0165.xml (accessed on 1 September 2021); TOMAZ MASTNAK, JULIA ELYACHAR, TOM BOELLSTORFF, *Botanical Decolonization: Rethinking Native Plants*, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 32/2014, pp. 363–380.

5 I have extrapolated on the role of ignorance, knowledge and non-knowledge in migration in, WILLIAM O'REILLY, *Non-Knowledge and Decision Making: The Challenge for the Historian*, in: The Dark Side of Knowledge. Histories of Ignorance, 1400 to 1800, (ed.) Cornel Zwierlein, Leiden 2016, pp. 397–420.

rians to consider drawing on these approaches when researching specific case studies in the history of migration. It also asks, if economists, sociologists and others can learn from historians, by using historic data sets to test and potentially validate their current models of decision making and risk assessment.

From at least the late-nineteenth century and the writings of Ernst Georg Ravenstein, historians, economists, political scientists, and geographers alike have sought to model, even codify, migration.[6] Migrants have been described as the 'energy' moving through the environment, and migrant traffickers as one 'control subsystem' determining who leaves, when and to where.[7] For others, migration is part of a 'life path', where the distance travelled by a migrant could be logarithmically transformed according to a person's 'information field' – a distant place some thousands of kilometres away might be viewed as only twice as distant as a place just hundreds of kilometres away, depending on what one knew, or believed oneself to know, about the distant place.[8]

The standard economics of migration continues to rely heavily on neoclassical models and, to a lesser part, on the 'new economics' of labour migration.[9] Interest has been directed towards the question of risk in migration, suggesting that instead of being globally risk-averse, as assumed in expected utility theory, migrants are generally risk-loving and will trade medium-level risks for imme-

6 ERNEST GEORGE RAVENSTEIN, *The Laws of Migration – I*, Journal of the Statistical Society 48/1885, pp. 167–227; ERNEST GEORGE RAVENSTEIN, *The Laws of Migration – II*, Journal of the Statistical Society 52/1889, pp. 214–301; PHILIP REES, NIK LOMAX, *Ravenstein Revisited: The Analysis of Migration, Then and Now*, Comparative Population Studies 44/2019, pp. 341–412; CHRISTINA BOSWELL, *Combining Economics and Sociology in Migration Theory*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 34/2008, no. 4, pp. 549–566.

7 AKIN MABOGUNJE, *Systems Approach to a Theory of Rural-Urban Migration*, Geographical Analysis 2/1970, pp. 1–18.

8 TORSTEN HÄGERSTRAND, *Migration and Area*, in: Migration in Sweden, (ed.) D. Hannerberg, Lund 1957, pp. 27–158; TORSTEN HÄGERSTRAND, *Innovation Diffusion as a Spatial Process*, Chicago 1967; TORSTEN HÄGERSTRAND, *Space, Time and Human Conditions*, in: Dynamic Allocation of Urban Space, (eds.) A. Kalrqvist, L. Lundqvist, F. Snickers, Farnborough 1975, pp. 3–12.

9 MILOSLAV BAHNA, *Intra-EU Migration from Slovakia: An Evaluation of New Economics of Labour Migration and Migrant Networks Theories*, European Societies 15/2013, no. 3, pp. 388–407; DOUGLAS MASSEY, *Towards an Integrated Model of International Migration*, Eastern Journal of European Studies 3/2012, no. 2, pp. 9–35; MICHAEL P. TODARO, *A Model of Labor Migration and Urban Unemployment in Less Developed Countries*, The American Economic Review 59/1969, pp. 138–148; JOHN R. HARRIS, MICHAEL P. TODARO, *Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis*, The American Economic Review 60/1970, pp. 126–142; JACOB MINCER, *Family Migration Decisions*, Journal of Political Economy 86/1978, no. 5, pp. 749–773; ODED STARK, *The Migration of Labor*, Malden (MA) 1991.

diate higher risks, but subsequent lower risks.[10] However, already in the 1960s, economists came to recognise the limits of considering utilities under the neoclassical approach. '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 Jeremy Bentham's calculus of pleasure and pain, the calculus of +'s and –'s at origin and destination is always inexact.'[11] However, 'behavioural anomalies' which cannot be explained by expected utility theory show the standard economic model which considers migration to be, at best, incomplete.[12] Standard, expected utility theory and assumptions about the rational decision making of potential migrants would assume, for instance, that migrants reveal a preference in their choice of a particular destination over another if migration to that other destination were both possible and affordable. However, real and revealed preferences in migration are not necessarily identical.

It is here that solving the problem of migration, of deciding to stay or go, becomes significant. Selecting a course of action among a range of alternative options, be that rational or irrational, is the result of a cognitive process which has come to be labelled as 'decision making'.[13] Decision making in migration leads to a choice, which prompts action to leave or to remain.[14] There are biases in decision making, both cognitive and personal; there are also limitations in decision making which come about as a result of group think.[15] And there are important distinctions to be drawn between problem solving and decision making, most significantly, that problems are generally deviations from performance standards while decision making involves the establishment, classification and ordering of objectives, before they are evaluated leading to a decision which

10 ANNA KLABUNDE, FRANS WILLEKENS, *Decision-Making in Agent-Based Models of Migration: State of the Art and Challenges*, European Journal of Population 32/2016, no. 1, pp. 73–97; G. SAHOTA, *An Economic Analysis of Internal Migration in Brazil*, Journal of Political Economy 76/1968, no. 2, pp. 218–245; ELIAKIM KATZ, ODED STARK, *Labour Migration and Risk Aversion in Less Developed Countries*, Journal of Labor Economics 4/1986, no. 1, pp. 134–149.

11 EVERETT S. LEE, *A Theory of Migration*, Demography 3/1966, pp. 45–57, p. 50.

12 'Behavioural anomalies' is the term of DANIEL KAHNEMAN, JACK L. KNETSCH, RICHARD H. THALER, *Anomalies: The Endowment Effect, Loss Aversion, and Status Quo Bias*, Journal of Economic Perspectives 5/1991, no. 1, pp. 193–206.

13 GERARD P. HODGKINSON, WILLIAM H. STARBUCK, *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Decision Making*, Oxford 2008.

14 MADDY THOMPSON, *Migration Decision-Making: a Geographical Imaginations Project*, Area 49/2017, no. 1, pp. 77–84.

15 KARIN AMIT, ILAN RISS, MICHA POPPER, *The Role of Leadership in the Migration Decision-Making Process*, Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies 14/2016, no. 4, pp. 371–389.

can be evaluated, leading to an action.[16] For this reason, 'behavioural anomalies' which lie outside standard economic models of motivation for migration, and choice of destination, are incomplete in explaining both motivation for migration and decision making surrounding the selection of a destination. Decisions about staying, leaving and even returning depend on recent changes in rational beliefs about the current and future economic situation in the country a migrant is departing as well as the destination country.[17] It is here that migrant agents and human traffickers played, and continue to play, a crucial, indeed critical, role in the decision making process. Sharing views and news about the future general economic situation abroad – authoritatively shared, even when incomplete and inaccurate – coupled with highlighting the negative situation at home, should result in a significant increase in migration outflows; and conversely, migration flows could be restricted in a situation where negative details about the economic situation in the destination country were promoted and put into circulation.

In *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith noted that individuals have different perceptions of losses and gains:

> We suffer more, it has already been observed, when we fall from a better to a worse situation, than we ever enjoy when we rise from a worse to a better. Security, therefore, is the first and the principal object of prudence. It is averse to expose our health, our fortune, our rank, or reputation, to any sort of hazard. It is rather cautious than enterprising, and more anxious to preserve the advantages which we already possess, than forward to prompt us to the acquisition of still greater advantages. The methods of improving our fortune, which it principally recommends to us, are those which expose to no loss or hazard; real knowledge and skill in our trade or profession, assiduity and industry in the exercise of it, frugality, and even some degree of parsimony, in all our expences.[18]

16 Research in this area crosses a number of fields, including law, medicine, psychology and management studies; see, for example, WENDY J. L. THORNTON, HEIKE A. DUMKE, *Age Differences in Everyday Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Effectiveness*, Psychology and Aging 20/2005, no. 1, pp. 85–99; PAUL BREST, LINDA HAMILTON KRIEGER, *Problem Solving, Decision Making, and Professional Judgement*, Oxford 2010.

17 MATHIAS CZAIKA, *Migration and Economic Prospects*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 41/2015, no. 1, pp. 58–82, p. 59; HEIN DE HAAS, TINEKE FOKKEMA, MOHAMED F. FIHRI, *Return Migration as Failure or Success? The Determinants of Return Migration Intentions Among Moroccan Migrants in Europe*, Journal of International Migration and Integration 16/2015, no. 2, pp. 415–429.

18 ADAM SMITH, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, London 1759, here 2005 reprint of the 1790 London 6th edition, Sao Paulo 2005, pp. 311–312.

Adam Smith constructed the first economic theory which tried to explain labour migration, and considered labour as any other factor commodity; the mobility of labour should not be limited by national borders.[19] In highlighting the principle of loss aversion, Smith predated by exactly two hundred years the first version of Prospect theory, which replaces the notion of 'utility' with 'prospect', and thereby accentuates the uncertainty of the outcome – what are the 'prospects', rather than the 'utilities', in evaluating potential outcomes.[20]

Recent work has sought to look at uncertainty and risk perceptions relating to the decision making process in migration.[21] In seeking to explain short-term fluctuations of migration flows, insights from behavioural economics and prospect theory within the field of economics have allowed a 'migration prospect theory' to emerge.[22] Individuals with an intention to migrate assess, with as much precision as possible, general economic prospects, and most especially the labour market situation, both in their home territory and abroad. By so doing, the potential migrant forms reference points for their migration-related expectations, leading to an expectation-based adjustment about future economic prospects. If there are deviations from these reference points, they generate expectation-based utility gains or losses for the potential migrant, which can affect the value of the migration option. As a result, the decision to emigrate can be postponed or even cancelled.

In studies of early twenty-first century migration, it has been found that migration flows respond more strongly to negative than to positive economic prospects, indicating loss aversion of potential migrants; and that expectation-based prospects about the future economic situations in the home and destination

19 HANIA ZLOTNIK, *Theories of International Migration*, in: Demography: A Treatise in Population, (eds.) G. Caselli, G. Wunsch, J. Vallin, Cambridge (MA) 2005, p. 293; SAMUEL HOLLANDER, *The Economics of Adam Smith*, Toronto-Buffalo 1973, pp. 258–261.

20 See also: DANIEL RAUHUT, *Adam Smith on Migration*, Migration Letters 7/2010, no. 1, pp. 105–113.

21 MARINA KORZENEVICA, *Moving, Staying and Returning Under Uncertainty. Labour Migration and Identity Formation among Young Nepali Men*, Geoforum 112/2020, pp. 148–157; PAUL G. J. O'CONNELL, *Migration under Uncertainty: 'Try your Luck' or 'Wait and See'*, Journal of Regional Science 37/1997, no. 2, pp. 331–347; DANIEL KAHNEMAN, AMOS TVERSKY, *Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk*, Econometrica 47/1979, no. 2, pp. 263–291; AMOS TVERSKY, DANIEL KAHNEMAN, *Advances in Prospect Theory: Cumulative Representation of Uncertainty*, Journal of Risk and Uncertainty 5/1992, no. 4, pp. 297–323.

22 WILLIAM O'REILLY, JAMES BOYD, *Prospect Theory, Cascade Effects, and Migration: Analyzing Emigration 'Fevers' in the Historical Atlantic World*, The Journal of Interdisciplinary History 51/2020, no. 1, pp. 39–63; M. CZAIKA, *Migration and Economic Prospects*, esp. pp. 58–61.

country can counterbalance or reinforce structural economic incentives based on real economic aggregates.[23] Additionally, migration flows showed a diminishing sensitivity for larger fluctuations in expectation-based adjustments of economic prospects. In the pre-modern period, the motivations for migration were starker. Hunger, dispossession from the land, religious persecution or the threat of religious persecution, the threat and reality of violence and warfare and other factors contributed to the authorized and unauthorized movement of people and authorities frequently enacted repressive legislation and sanctions against men and women on the move, often labelled 'masterless'.[24] Increasingly in Europe, from the sixteenth century, permits and passes were required when travelling from one place to another.[25] By the early seventeenth century, many German rulers had formulated and enacted laws intended to tie servants more firmly to their masters, attempting to eliminate recurrent problems posed by vagrancy and itinerancy.[26] Some European seaboard states transported their poor and vagrant inhabitants overseas, while others refused the destitute permission to depart their jurisdiction.[27] In the early modern period, migrants faced an insurmountable legal obstacle to their ambitions. Only nobles, merchants, and the clergy were permitted to cross borders with little or no difficulty. For others, migration involved a legal process that could be both expensive and proscriptive, at a time when legal regimes were growing more defined, complex and restrictive of the person.[28] The diminutive size of many early-modern European states created situations where travelling only a short distance brought one in contact with the

23 M. CZAIKA, *Migration and Economic Prospects*, p. 59

24 A. L. BEIER, *Masterless Men. The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560–1640*, New York 1986, pp. xix and 10–11; LEO LUCASSEN, *Eternal Vagrants? State Formation, Migration, and Travelling Groups in Western Europe, 1350–1914,* in: Migration, Migration History, History. Old Paradigms and New Perspectives, (eds.) Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen, Oxford 1997, p. 228; BRONISLAW GEREMEK, *Truands et Misérables dans l'Europe moderne (1350–1600)*, Paris 1976, esp. ch. 4, 'Le mauvais pauvre: stéréotype et réalité', pp. 111–140.

25 WERNER BERTELSMANN, *Das Paßwesen: eine völkerrechtliche Studie,* Strassburg 1914, pp. 17–18.

26 MARC RAEFF, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change Through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800*, New Haven (CT) 1983, pp. 74, 89–90.

27 A. L. BEIER, *Masterless Men*, pp. 162–163; MARK HÄBERLEIN, *Vom Oberrhein zum Susquehanna: Studien zur badischen Auswanderung nach Pennsylvania im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1993, p. 56; ANDREAS BLOCHER, *Die Eigenart der Zürcher Auswanderer nach Amerika 1734–1744*, Zürich 1976, p. 88.

28 LAUREN BENTON, *Law and Colonial Cultures. Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900*, Cambridge 2002, esp. ch. 1, 'Legal Regimes and Colonial Cultures', pp. 1–30.

borders of a number of different states.[29] By the time a definition was codified in the new German imperial law of the later nineteenth-century, emigration was defined as the voluntary evacuation of the territory in which a citizen normally resides, without the intention of returning.

In preceding centuries, however, regional variations in legal codification meant that a variety of legal reactions to migration remained open to the early-modern European state. Some states assisted emigration, both tacitly by incentivising emigration to overseas colonies, for instance; and actively, by banning or expelling subjects deemed a threat to the state's well-being. The decision to uproot and move or to remain where one resided was influenced by the religious affiliation of the local ruler and his toleration, or persecution, of members of other faiths. German imperial law governing emigration dates from section 24 of the Treaty of Augsburg (1555), *cuius regio, eius religio*, which granted freedom of emigration for religious reasons.[30] A further loosening of limitations on emigration was included in the treaties of Westphalia (Article V, sections 36–7) where, referring to the *benefitium emigrandi*; 1624 was deemed to be the *annus decretorius* or 'Normal Year', thereby granting refugees the freedom to return to a jurisdiction in which they had resided in 1624. The settlement reached at Westphalia served to promote the formation of religiously homogeneous states throughout Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century and thereafter and in many ways, Westphalia created the category of legally recognised religious

29 Even as late as 1897, in the German 'Law of the Nature of Emigration' (*Gesetz über das Auswanderungswesen*, 9 June 1897), there is no definition of migration, immigration or emigration. FELIX STOERK, *Das Reichsgesetz über das Auswanderungswesen von 9. Juni 1897*, Berlin 1899, p. 129; HARALD WILHELM TETZLAFF, *Das deutsche Auswanderungswesen, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Übervölkerung Deutschlands, in staats- und völkerrechtlicher Sicht*, Ph.D. Diss., Göttingen 1953, p. 1.

30 Peace of Augsburg, 1555. '§ 24. Wo aber Unsere, auch der Churfürsten, Fürsten und Stände Unterthanen der alten Religion oder Augspurgischen Confession anhängig, von solcher ihrer Religion wegen aus Unsern, auch der Churfürsten, Fürsten und Ständen des H. Reichs Landen, Fürstenthumen, Städten oder Flecken mit ihren Weib und Kindern an andere Orte ziehen und sich nieder thun wolten, denen soll solcher Ab- und Zugang, auch Verkauffung ihrer Haab und Güter gegen zimlichen, billigen Abtrag der Leibeigenschafft und Nachsteuer, wie es jedes Orts von Alters anhero üblichen, herbracht und gehalten worden ist, unverhindert männiglichs zugelassen und bewilligt, auch an ihren Ehren und Pflichten allerding unentgolten seyn. Doch soll den Oberkeiten an ihren Gerechtigkeiten und Herkommen der Leibeigenen halben, dieselbigen ledig zu zehlen oder nicht, hiedurch nichts abgebrochen oder benommen seyn.' ULRICH SCHEUNER, *Die Auswanderungsfreiheit in der Verfassungsgeschichte und im Verfassungsrecht Deutschlands*, Tübingen 1950, p. 208: 'Im 16. Jahrhundert…gewinnt ein begrenztes Abzugsrecht auch Anerkennung im Reichsrecht'; JULIUS WEISKE, *Rechtslexikon für Juristen aller teutschen Staaten*, subject: *Auswanderung*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1842, pp. 510–512.

refugee in Europe.[31] The three largest religious denominations, Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism and Reformed or Calvinism, were recognised by the treaties of Westphalia in 1648, but none of the smaller sectarian Protestant groups secured legal or political acknowledgement.[32] Many members of smaller Christian communities therefore fell outside the legislative code and were subjected to restrictive legislation which governed their freedom of movement in most of Europe; others had the liberty to leave, but only without their goods, needing to forfeit all if they chose to uproot.[33] Cameralist economics and the preference for a large domestic population was often the defining factor when formulating state policy to emigration.

When freely undertaken, migration is a decision to leave a known location for a comparatively unknown or unfamiliar one. It is an act in risk taking or risk avoidance. By integrating prospect theory, which offers a model for decision making under risk, into the analysis of migration, it is possible to create a plausible framework that expands the existing tools of migration theory and history, which currently upholds that people are motivated to move toward an increased utility for their labour, and that human networks support their efforts. Existing history and theory agree that the social capital of successfully relocated migrants provides the initial information, subsistence, lodging, and work for subsequent migrants, lowering the potential for failure and increasing potential success. The more developed and mature these networks are, the lower the risks become, leading to high-volume migration between two points. Networks help by lowering risks and the uncertainties involved.

31 ALEXANDER MÜLLER, *Die deutschen Auswanderungs-, Freizügigkeits- und Heimatverhältnisse*, Leipzig 1841, p. 17; HEINRICH ZÖPFL, *Grundsätze des gemeinen deutschen Staatsrechts*, Leipzig-Heidelberg 1863, p. 848; ADOLF GERBER, *Die Nassau-Dillenburgerer Auswanderung nach Amerika im 18. Jahrhundert*, Flensburg 1930, pp. 16–18, 30–32. JUSTUS J. MOSER, *Von der Landeshoheit in Ansehung der Personen und des Vermögens (Neues Teutsches Staatsrecht, Theil 16,8)*, Frankfurt am Main-Leipzig 1773, p. 218.

32 HENNING P. JÜRGENS, THOMAS WELLER, *Religion und Mobilität: zum Verhältnis von raumbezogener Mobilität und religiöser Identitätsbildung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, Göttingen 2011; SUSANNE LACHENICHT, *Religious refugees in Europe, Asia and North America*, Hamburg 2007.

33 FRANZ JOSEPH BODMANN, *Pragmatische Geschichte, Grund und inneres Territorialverhältnis des Abzugs- und Nachsteuerrechts in Deutschland überhaupt und im Erzstift Mainz insbesondere*, Mainz 1791, vol. 1, pp. 34–35: '…und mag ein jeglicher, der in dem Reich gesessen hat, ziehen und farn, wor er wil, und sol im nymant daran pruden odir hindern.' and p. 103; GEORG MEYER, *Lehrbuch des deutschen Verwaltungsrechts*, München-Leipzig 1913, p. 103; LORENZ VON STEIN, *Die Verwaltungslehre*, Stuttgart 1866, part II, p. 191.

Both migration theory and the study of historical migration demonstrate the premise that migration systems attain their greatest volumes of movement when both risk and access barriers are perceived to be low. Yet even when international migration systems attain maturity, and risks and access barriers are low, most people still do not uproot and move. From a basic standpoint of income inequality, for instance, it is likely that most nineteenth-century European workers would have attained better financial remuneration for their labour in the United States. Despite some of the largest-scale and best-developed migration networks in history, however, the higher financial returns for labour in North America were not worth the risk, however well mitigated. In the nineteenth century, most Europeans stayed at home.[34] The long history of migration has also witnessed situations in which the opposite of these circumstances holds true; where sudden, unexpectedly large movements occurred when migration risks were high, network externalities were low, and large-scale emigration occurred in highly condensed timeframes. In the twentieth century, the flight and expulsion of over 14 million Germans in the years after 1944 was a singularly striking case in point.[35] And in the twenty-first century, the ongoing flight of refugees from war-torn Syria which began in 2011 is a daily reminder of the lengths to which women, men and children are forced to go to find safety and protection.[36] This contravention to accepted migration systems theory tended to occur when adverse material conditions skewed typical processes.

34 The issues of risk and access barriers were first explored in the early 1960s, analysed and codified across the fields of sociology and Atlantic migration history. See JOHN S. MACDONALD, LEATRICE D. MACDONALD, *Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighbourhood Formation, and Social Networks*, Millbank Memorial Fund Quarterly 42/1964, pp. 82–97; *From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration*, (eds.) HAROLD RUNBLAUM, HANS NORMAN, Minneapolis 1976. Outside of private social relations, see also the highly structured business of social capital in the Atlantic system focused on the immigrant banking sector: JARED N. DAY, *Credit, Capital and Community: Informal Banking in Immigrant Communities in the United States, 1880–1914*, Financial History Review 9/2002, pp. 65–78. During the peak of transatlantic migration (1900–1914), 13% of the population is estimated to have departed from the most demographically prone regions of Europe. DREW KEELING, *The Business of Transatlantic Migration*, Zürich 2012, p. 34.

35 INGO HAAR, *„Bevölkerungsbilanzen" und „Vertreibungsverluste". Zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte der deutschen Opferangaben aus Flucht und Vertreibung*, in: Herausforderung Bevölkerung: zu Entwicklung des modernen Denkens über die Bevölkerung vor, im und nach dem Dritten Reich, (eds.) Josef Ehmer, Ursula Ferdinand, Jürgen Reulecke, Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 267–281, pp. 277–278.

36 See, *inter alia*, *A Timeline of the Syrian Civil War and Refugee Crisis*, https://www.unicef.ie/stories/timeline-syrian-war-refugee-crisis/, (accessed 1 September 2021).

Migration and Risk

Migration is informed by, generates and ameliorates risk, whether for migrants, non-migrants in the home country or for populations in the destination country.[37] It influences those who migrate and those who remain behind in differing ways; the means of migration, whether using the services of a migrant agent or a human trafficker; the choice of destination; and the decision to stay in the new location or to return home. Migration also generates risk, both real and perceived, most especially for those who migrate illegally. And migration can be seen as a means of ameliorating risk, of striving to improve. Migration is also a means of knowledge acquisition, enabling an individual to manage risk associated with further migration and thereby increasing 'risk resilience'.[38] In this context, risk can be defined as an uncertain consequence of an event or an activity – in this case, migration – with respect to something that people value, or where people themselves are in jeopardy and where the outcome is uncertain.[39]

In the process of migration there is always a degree of uncertainty in many areas, and that uncertainty has two primary sources. The first is based on the impracticability of obtaining comprehensive, or even full, knowledge about current conditions in the home territory, even more especially in the targeted destination.[40] Gossip, the unregulated trade of unverified information, certainly plays a part in informing and misinforming potential migrants, too, as does 'the colonization of values by self-defined experts' – individuals who present as self-defined experts and walk the fine line between mastering, and being mastered by,

37 ALLAN M. WILLIAMS, VLADIMÍR BALÁŽ, *Migration, Risk and Uncertainty*, New York-London 2015, p. 3.

38 ALLAN M. WILLIAMS, VLADIMÍR BALÁŽ, *International Migration and Knowledge*, New York-London 2008; JEFFREY ALWANG, PAUL B. SIEGEL, STEEN L. JORGENSEN, *Vulnerability: A View from Different Disciplines*, The World Bank, Social Protection Discussion Paper Series 0115, New York 2001.

39 This definition of risk draws on the differing, but complementary, definitions of risk in EUGENE A. ROSA, *The Logical Structure of the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF): Metatheoretical Foundation and Policy Implications*, in: The Social Amplification of Risk, (eds.) Nick Pidegeon, Roger E. Kaspersen, Paul Slovic, Cambridge 2003, pp. 47–76, and *International Risk Governance Council* (2005), http://irgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/IRGC_WP_No_1_Risk_Governance__reprinted_version_3.pdf (accessed 24 May 2015). See also TERJE AVEN, ORTWIN RENN, *On Risk Defined as an Event Where the Outcome is Uncertain*, Journal of Risk Research, 12/2009, pp. 1–11.

40 Defined as a distinction between tacit and codified knowledge: MICHAEL POLANYI, *The Tacit Dimension*, London 1966.

the information they possess.[41] Potential migrants can gather what information is available and can secure a relatively good, albeit incomplete, structured knowledge about their 'new home' destination – typically from printed material which circulates widely; or by word of mouth. In the pre-modern, just as much as in the modern period, correspondence networks played a considerable role in maintaining social networks between migrants and their home community. Despite their private-public nature, or perhaps precisely because of the personal nature of the correspondence, letters were often read aloud to assembled groups, to encourage or discourage emigration, binding doubtful migrants with ties of personal success, or of failure, in new-world lands. Letters were also copied and widely circulated, finding an audience far beyond that ever imagined by the author.[42] In the pre-nineteenth century period, such literature was rare and not very widely available, not least because of the censorious attitudes and censuring actions of the agencies of the state. The value of the tacit knowledge about life 'abroad' which was acquired by would-be emigrants from returned migrants should not be underestimated. And there is evidence that women and men acquired knowledge and approached risk and expectation in migration in differing ways.[43] Studies have cast light on the differences in expectations of life and success in the destination country, a difference between men's and women's expectations of life abroad and in the melioration and exacerbation of gender differences both in the sending household and in the receiving community. Women seem, on the whole, to have a more accurate estimation of the quality of life in the destination, when compared with men.[44] Returning migrants were brokers of tacit knowledge.[45]

41 BARBARA M. BENEDICT, *Curiosity. A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*, Chicago-London 2001, p. 2.

42 For letters in the emigration process, see, *inter alia*: PETER MESENHÖLLER, *Der Auswandererbrief. Bedingungen und Typik schriftlicher Kommunikation im Auswanderungsprozeß*, in: Der große Aufbruch, (ed.) Peter Assion, Marburg 1985, pp. 111–124; LEO SCHELBERT, HEDWIG RAPPOLT, *Alles ist ganz anders hier. Auswandererschicksale in Briefen aus zwei Jahrhunderten*, Olten-Freiburg i. Br. 1977, pp. 33–39, 81; HANSMARTIN SCHWARZMAIER, *Auswandererbriefe aus Nordamerika. Quellen im Grenzbereich zwischen Geschichtlicher Landeskunde, Wanderungsforschung und Literatursoziologie,* Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins 126/1978, pp. 303–369.

43 DAVID MCKENZIE, JOHN GIBSON, STEVEN STILLMAN, *A Land of Milk and Honey with Streets Paved with Gold: Do Emigrants Have Over-optimistic Expectations About Incomes Abroad?*, Journal of Development Economics 102/2013, pp. 116–127.

44 See, *inter alia*, KARINE TOROSYAN et al., *Migration, Household Tasks, and Gender: Evidence from the Republic of Georgia*, The International Migration Review 50/2016, no. 2, pp. 445–474.

45 VLADIMÍR BALÁŽ, ALLAN M. WILLIAMS, KATARÍNA MORAVČÍKOVÁ, MARTINA CHRANČOKOVÁ, *What Competences, Which Migrants? Tacit and Explicit Knowledge*

The absence of tacit knowledge alone, and uncertainty about life in the destination, is rarely enough to dissuade someone from migrating; rather, general uncertainty about the future in the place of origin and in the destination country, exerts a more significant influence on decision making.[46] Individuals act on the basis of expectations, seeking to convert uncertainties into expected outcomes, based on a combination of knowledge and intuition, but also informed by gossip, hearsay, propaganda and other contributory factors.[47] 'Migration should probably be understood as being associated with expectations about risk formed under conditions of partial knowledge. This is best understood as a continuum of knowledge and uncertainty, or of risk and uncertainty, which is fluid with individuals moving in both directions along the continuum in terms of personal understandings of the limitations of knowledge.'[48]

What is clear is that all potential migrants hope and expect to decrease uncertainty about their plans and transform uncertainty into risk-neutral probabilities, by basing them on greater certainties, however approximately that can be expressed.[49] To do this, migrants need to engage in the search for, and evaluation of, information. In the early modern period in Europe, print media played a limited role in directly influencing the decision making processes of the vast majority of migrants leaving the continent or relocating to other areas in Europe: migrants were either illiterate, or did not have access to print, or had only very limited access to the types of print that may have been helpful. By far the most important source of information were social networks, which provided both knowledge and direct practical help for everyday life; this holds true for migrants today just as it did in the past.[50] Uncertainties and risk associated with the decision to migrate and with the journey are reduced, therefore, by using both

Acquired Via Migration, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 47/2021, no. 8, pp. 1758–1774; DANY BAHAR, HILLEL RAPOPORT, *Migration, Knowledge Diffusion and the Comparative Advantage of Nations*, The Economic Journal 128/2018, no. 612, pp. F273–F305.

46 P. G. J. O'CONNELL, *Migration under Uncertainty*, pp. 331–347.

47 ALEXANDER STYHRE, *Rethinking Knowledge: A Bergsonian Critique of the Notion of Tacit Knowledge*, British Journal of Management 15/2004, pp. 177–188.

48 ALLAN M. WILLIAMS, VLADIMÍR BALÁŽ, *Migration, Risk, Tolerance and Uncertainty: Theoretical Perspectives,* Population, Space and Place 18/2012, pp. 167–180, p. 169.

49 'Risk aversion is observationally equivalent to risk-neutral pessimism by applying a change of measure to risk-neutral probabilities. The observational equivalence of risk aversion to risk--neutral pessimism may provide a useful framework for proving results in the study of several areas of interest.' J. B. HEATON, *Risk Aversion as Risk-neutral Pessimism: A Simple Proof*, International Review of Law and Economics 56/2018, pp. 70–72, 70.

50 SIMONE BERTOLI, ILSE RUYSSEN, *Networks and Migrants' Intended Destination*, Journal of Economic Geography 18/2018, no. 4, pp. 705–728.

formal and informal channels to access information. Yet it is informal channels which proved most advantageous in providing the tacit knowledge deemed most useful for the move, and which is more difficult to acquire by other means. Not only was it easier to acquire information, but greater trust was placed in the informal knowledge gathered from friends, family, neighbours and fellow country people – this reliance on locally-sourced information may be linked to the concepts of source preference and source sensitivity.[51] Most of the information which migrants need, such as how to negotiate a border crossing or a customs check, or which migrant agent or shipper to trust, is tacit in nature, and it is difficult to translate into explicit knowledge; although many authors writing in support of emigration, and against emigration, did try to do just that. The tacit information provided by social networks – including information provided by migrant traffickers, both personally known to the migrants or, albeit not personally known, nevertheless 'local' and 'local sounding', was most often preferred. This tacit information was characterised by a higher level of trust and by a lower communication barrier when compared with printed sources. It may well be that, in those parts of an area where a choice of destination abroad did exist, emigration in one direction was preferred in spite of the availability of printed material encouraging emigration in the other direction, where social networks and immigration agents promoted a particular destination over another.

Yet migrants' decisions may rely on belief and trust in family members and friends; on familial, social and professional networks; on faith, on conviction, on instinct; just as much as they may on 'affective or emotional knowledge' or intuition, and on information and intellect.[52] Migrants do not leave their cultural histories behind them, but rather, they are aware of the scripts of risk and behaviour in the new country. One expression of this is the notion of 'the culture of migration', where migration is deeply ingrained in particular contexts in both the values and in the communities. The symbolic and religious understanding of migration can also play a significant role in motivating, justifying and contextualizing migration; biblical models and narratives help to relate personal experience to a broader collective identity and experience across history and time.[53] In

51 A. M. WILLIAMS, V. BALÁŽ, *Migration, Risk and Uncertainty*, p. 54.

52 A. STYHRE, *Rethinking Knowledge*.

53 For an excellent consideration of how religious belief and emotions could inform views of home, abroad and travel, see: RENATE DÜRR, ULRIKE STRASSER, *Wissensgenerierung als emotionale Praktik. Ethnographisches Schreiben und emotionalisiertes Lesen in Joseph Stöckleins S.J. Neuem Welt-Bott,* Historische Anthropologie 28/2020, no. 3, pp. 354–378.

such contexts, migration is seen as a rite of passage, comparable in many ways to rituals of entering adulthood or to marriage.[54]

It is important, once again, to remind that migration is always a story of biography, of the life or lives of the person and people involved. Migration is dramatic – sudden and striking, exciting and impressive, effective in positive and negative ways, often in extreme ways – and theorizing the process of migration must never diminish the emotional and psychological effects of uprooting and relocating. Every experience is unique and remains so; yet, there is value in considering both the networks and processes which are shared by many migrants in their stories of migration. Migration is a relational process, and individual migrants define and shaped their migrant network, just as the migrant networks shape them; knowledge is transmitted and assistance to hopeful migrants is extended.[55] Networks serve as a means of reducing the risks attached to migration, and more importantly to translate some of the uncertainties surrounding migration into manageable risks. And networks can mediate who stays and who migrates, where they migrate to, and the channels of migration they may use. Such networks are dynamic and their capacity to mediate risk also changes over time, as does their impact on the full transaction costs of migration. There is evidence of the differential importance of particular members of migrants' networks, with there being significant differences between family and kin versus different types of friends and relations.[56] However, we still know very little of the dynamics of migration networks.

People needing or wishing to migrate cannot always rely on informal social networks, however, so migrants also rely on various intermediaries, many of which are commodified forms of providing assistance. These range from return migrants, who bring back to their home village, town or territory news of 'abroad' and of their happy life (as it is so often described), encouraging (or sometimes discouraging) their family and friends and anyone who will listen to uproot and come with them.[57] State-sponsored migrant recruiters, too, like labour recruiters commissioned to recruit workers, operate as intermediary support mechanisms;

54 On this phenomenon in the Mexican context, see JEFFREY H. COHEN, *The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico*, Austin 2004.

55 A. M. WILLIAMS, V. BALÁŽ, *Migration, Risk and Uncertainty*, p. 149.

56 Work on Irish migration is especially rich in this area; LOUISE RYAN, *'I had a Sister in England': Family-led Migration, Social Networks and Irish Nurses,* Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 34/2008, no. 3, pp. 453–470; LOUISE RYAN, *Family Matters: (E)migration, Familial Networks and Irish Women in Britain*, The Sociological Review 52/2004, no. 3, pp. 351–370.

57 ARTJOMS IVLEVS, *Happiness and the Emigration Decision*, IZA World of Labor 96/2014.

as do traffickers and people smugglers, who work in contravention of the law and often put the lives of the people who pay for their services in danger. These commodified forms of assistance provision can play a significant role, especially for first-time migrants, in reducing risk and uncertainties and by reducing the full transaction costs of the process. Migration is also a learning process, so that over time individual migrants tend to become more competent at directly managing the risks of migration. These agencies range from the formal to the informal, and from government provided, to government regulated, to government avoiding – especially when that involves the avoidance of governmental surveillance. Migrants – especially regular migrants – can also employ commercialised insurance services which collectivise and redistribute risks, ranging from the health to the employment arenas. However, some forms of insurance cover are not available to migrants, and especially to irregular migrants, leaving them highly exposed to particular risks.[58] A key issue for all migrants is knowing which intermediaries they can trust, given the costs involved and the potential returns on a successful migration, whether in terms of crossing borders, or of finding jobs or income. Taken together, these various forms of commodified forms of assistance, together with the resulting range of intermediaries, effectively represent the intermediate level in the migration process, and often constitute the essential cement that binds the migration process and allows it to function in the face of significant risks and uncertainties.[59]

First, migrants find it easier to gather information from friends and family, rather than from official information channels, and to secure information on difficult-to-codify elements such as emotions experienced, whether the disappointments, challenges or joys of migration. Moreover, it is likely that potential migrants do not even know what all the important factors are – that is, all the necessary areas of knowledge they require – about the destination, until they have acquired this tacit knowledge from friends and family. The migrant's informal networks, therefore, can both clarify areas of uncertainty and contribute to forming more realistic estimates of risk. Second, migrants can also employ a range of formal intermediaries. The most obvious of these is reliance on in-

58 Irregular migration refers to the movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations or international agreements governing the entry into, or exit from, the state of origin, transit or destination. See, KHALID KOSER, *Dimensions and Dynamics of Irregular Migration*, Population Space and Place 16/2010, no. 3, pp. 181–193.

59 A. M. WILLIAMS, V. BALÁŽ, *Migration, Risk and Uncertainty*, p. 150.

formal insurance, or risk sharing, in the face of risk.[60] Migrants can use intermediation provided by migrancy agencies. The agents of individual employers recruiting face-to-face in countries of origin have today been replaced by specialised agencies.[61] Such agencies may mediate but they do not, of course, eliminate the risks and uncertainties faced by migrants. Third and finally, migrants faced by significant border controls may rely on intermediaries to circumvent these, whether via regular or irregular channels.[62] Typically this contributes to smuggling and trafficking – two very different ways of engaging with risk.[63]

Intermediaries, individuals and agencies, have two important characteristics. First, potentially they can reduce the transaction (total) costs of migration because of their superior codified and tacit knowledge of both the destination and the migration process.[64] This ranges from dealing with the, at times, bureaucratic mazes of visas and migration regulations, to networks of contacts with employers, to superior language knowledge. Intermediaries cannot eliminate either risk or uncertainty, but they can realign the boundary between knowledge and uncertainty. Second, faced with uncertainty, migrants seek reassurances about the outcomes of their migrations. Therefore, one of the qualities they seek from intermediaries is that they can trust them. As has been noted, 'for people as for plants, frequent repotting disrupts root systems. It takes time for a mobile individual to put down new roots.'[65] Migrants, then, frequently need reassurance from an agent, in advance of migrating, that they will prosper and thrive in their destination country and that any aspects of social capital they hold and they

60 MELANIE MORTEN, *Temporary Migration and Endogenous Risk Sharing in Village India*, The Journal of Political Economy 127/2019, no. 1, pp. 1–46, p. 1.

61 There is an increasing body of work on the role of migration agencies in migrant recruitment, most especially addressing migration today; see, *inter alia*, DEBORAH SPORTON, *'They Control My Life': the Role of Local Recruitment Agencies in East European Migration to the U.K.*, Population Space and Place 19/2013, no. 5, pp. 443–458.

62 ANTOINE PÉCOUD, CÉLINE NIEUWENHUYS, *Human Trafficking, Information Campaigns, and Strategies of Migration Control*, The American Behavioral Scientist 50/2007, no. 12, pp. 1674–1695; REBECCA MILLER, SEBASTIAN BAUMEISTER, *Managing Migration: Is Border Control Fundamental to Anti-Trafficking and Anti-Smuggling Interventions?*, Anti-Trafficking Review, Special Issue: Human Rights at the Border, 2013, no. 2, pp. 15–32.

63 The issues of smuggling and trafficking are important, too, and will be discussed below.

64 JOHAN LINDQUIST, *Anthropology of Brokers and Brokerage*, in: International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, (ed.) James D. Wright, Amsterdam 2015, 2nd ed., vol. 2, pp. 870–874.

65 ROBERT D. PUTNAM, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse of American Community. Revised and Updated*, New York 2020, p. 204.

possess at home can also be translated to their new home.[66] In cases of extreme pressure and the regrettably all-too-familiar condition of emergency flight from persecution, violence, warfare and other forms of threat to life, urgency of departure for reasons of safety and security supersedes all other considerations. In such circumstances, access to information is even more important, yet the urgency of flight inevitably curtails access to multiple sources of information from intermediary sources. While the experiences of refugees and migrants, and the legal and humanitarian terms under which they move, may differ radically and in ways emotionally unimaginable, the role of information does not change. The time taken or permitted to evaluate information, the modes of accessing information may differ, and the ability to seek out differing interpretations on a given option or risk may be severely restricted or needed reduced to zero. Nevertheless, what differs is not the place of information in the process of moving, but the form, type and veracity of the information available. Where once, the sourcing of information may have relied on personal interaction, on listening to friends, family and religious and state figures, and increasingly on reading, today it can be more about securing access to power to charge a mobile telephone, to wi-fi, to the internet, to Facebook. In contexts such as this, intermediaries can seek to promote particular websites as more reliable sources of information; or they can control a global network of correspondence by using encrypted messaging services on a mobile 'phone.[67] In very different ways the reliance on reassurance applies both to regular migrant labour agencies, to refugees and to smugglers. In migration, as in many other arenas of life, 'trust begins where knowledge ends'.[68] There are, of course, important differences in how trust is theorized.[69] Whereas economists

66 JAMES P. LESAGE, *The Impact of Migration on Social Capital: Do Migrants Take their Bowling Balls with Them?*, Growth and Change. A Journal of Urban and Regional Policy 43/2012, no. 1, pp. 1–26.

67 ELISABETH EIDE, *Mobile Flight: Refugees and the Importance of Cell Phones*, Nordic Journal of Migration Research 10/2020, no. 2, pp. 67–81; KATJA KAUFMANN, *Navigating a New Life: Syrian Refugees and Their Smartphones in Vienna*, Information, Communication & Society, 21/2018, no. 6, pp. 882–898; PHILIPP SEUFERLING, *"We Demand Better Ways to Communicate": Pre-Digital Media Practices in Refugee Camps*, Media and Communication 7/2019, no. 2, pp. 207–217.

68 J. DAVID LEWIS, ANDREW WEIGERT, *Trust as a Social Reality*, Social Forces 63/1985, pp. 967–985.

69 See, for instance, CARY WU, *Does Migration Affect Trust? Internal Migration and the Stability of Trust among Americans*, Sociological Quarterly 61/2020, no. 3, pp. 523–543; PETER THISTED DINESEN, *Where You Come From or Where You Live? Examining the Cultural and Institutional Explanation of Generalized Trust Using Migration as a Natural Experiment*, European Sociological Review 29/2013, no. 1, pp. 114–128; HEIKE GRAF, *Media Practices and Forced*

conceptualise trust in terms of reductions in transaction costs, sociologists consider trust as given in advance and developed from shared values and routines.

Networks are a resource that can mediate risk. However, because migration may also disrupt existing networks, it can also increase the risks they are exposed to. Social capital is not easily transferred between places, because it tends to be location specific, so that migration is often associate with loss of social capital.[70] One factor that has to be considered by potential migrants is the risk of losing existing close ties and social capital, and the uncertainty attached to building new networks in the destination.

There are a number of ways in which networks can influence migration, and at least five key areas of influence can be identified:

1. Affinity: strong ties to relatives and friends in the region of origin tend to reduce migration.[71]
2. Information: relatives and friends at the destination act as information channels, thereby increasing the propensity to migrate.[72]
3. Facilitation: Friends and relatives tend to funnel migration to particular locations because they reduce the costs of migration to these destinations, through provision of support for finding jobs and houses.[73]

Migration: Trust Online and Offline, Media and Communication 6/2018, no. 2, pp. 149–157; SEONG HEE KIM, BYUNG-YEON KIM, *Migration and Trust: Evidence from West Germany After Unification*, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization 179/2020, pp. 425–441.

70 LESAGE, *The Impact of Migration on Social Capital*, pp. 1–26; PETER A. FISCHER, REINER MARTIN, THOMAS STRAUBHAAR, *'Should I stay or should I go?'*, in: International Migration, Mobility and Development, Multidisciplinary Perspectives, (eds.) Tomas Hammer, Grete Brochmann, Thomas Faist, Oxford 1997, pp. 49–90.

71 For a useful case study, see TIFFANY POLLOCK, *Migration, Affinities, and the Everyday Labor of Belonging among Young Burmese Men in Thailand*, Boyhood Studies 12/2019, no. 2, pp. 114–130.

72 VIANNY DEQUIEDT, YVES ZENOU, *International Migration, Imperfect Information, and Brain Drain*, Journal of Development Economics 101/2013, pp. 117–132. GARY COOMBS, *Opportunities, Information Networks and the Migration Distance Relationship*, Social Networks 1/1978, pp. 257–276.

73 GABRIELLA SANCHEZ, *Critical Perspectives on Clandestine Migration Facilitation: An Overview of Migrant Smuggling Research*, Journal on Migration and Human Security 5/2017, no. 1, pp. 9–27; ANDREAS HATZIGEORGIOU, *Migration as Trade Facilitation: Assessing the Links between International Trade and Migration*, The B. E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy 10/2010, no. 1, pp. 1–33; HARVEY M. CHOLDIN, *Kinship Networks in the Migration Process*, Demography 10/1973, pp. 163–175.

4. Conflict: conflicts within your network, in the family or community, may encourage migration.[74]
5. Encouragement: individuals may encourage other family members to migrate for a variety of reasons, including the diversification of household income in the face of risk.[75]

Networks which connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in the origin and the destination regions also contribute to circular and chain migration.[76] This relates particularly to the information and facilitating functions now in place. After migration by the first individual from a particular generating region to a destination, the monetary and psychological costs of migration to that place decrease for members of the migrant's social network, due to reduced uncertainty in the decision making process.[77] There is an interlocking circle here of cause and effect. Reduced costs encourage more migration, while the addition of these new migrants to the migrant network serves to expand it, further reducing risks for future migrants. Ultimately the risks may be reduced to near zero, simply because the existence of a very well-established migrant community at the destination ensures that the potential migrant has almost as much information about that place as about his/her home region.[78] In such a situation, migrant agents – often the unscrupulous human traffickers whose notoriety has come to the fore in recent years – cease to be of use.

The existence of networks assists in identifying the range of alternative destinations that may be considered by migrants, but not the reason for specifically selecting one of these. 'Herd effects', or the theory of information cascades, provide insights into this choice.[79] Herd behaviour involves discounting the infor-

74 DONALD M. MACRAILD, *Culture, Conflict and Migration: The Irish in Victorian Cumbria*, Liverpool 2017; ARIADNA ESTÉVEZ, *Human Rights, Migration, and Social Conflict: Towards a Decolonized Global Justice*, New York 2012.

75 *Encouragement of Migration*, International Labour Review 8/1923, no. 2, p. 246; A. M. WILLIAMS, V. BALÁŽ, *Migration, Risk and Uncertainty*, pp. 126–128.

76 MONICA BOYD, *Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas*, International Migration Review 23/1989, pp. 638–670.

77 W. O'REILLY, J. BOYD, *Prospect Theory, Cascade Effects, and Migration*.

78 KATHLEEN M. PREBLE, *Coercion Among International Female Trafficking Survivors During Exploitation*, Victims & Offenders 14/2019, no. 2, pp. 199–221.

79 JAMES C. D. FISHER, etc., *Interacting Information Cascades: On the Movement of Conventions Between Groups*, Economic Theory 63/2017, no. 1, pp. 211–231; GIL S. EPSTEIN, *Information Cascades and the Decision to Migrate*, Migration and Culture 8/2010, pp. 25–44; ABHIJIT V. BANERJEE, *A Simple Model of Herd Behaviour*, Quarterly Journal of Economics 107/1992, pp. 797–817; SUSHIL BIKHCHANDANI, DAVID HIRSHLEIFER, IVO WELCH,

mation one has acquired in order to follow the lead provided by others: herd behaviour implies, 'I will go where I have observed others go, because all those who went before me cannot be wrong, even though I would have chosen to go elsewhere.'[80] One case in point is the relatively-sudden emigration of families from the Palatinate in 1709, who amassed in Rotterdam in the hope to moving to England, following the reported success of a small group of migrants who travelled before them.[81] 'Emigration decisions are made generally under conditions of uncertainty. In such cases, we can only look to herd effects to explain initial immigrant clustering.'[82] This has been very well described by Sonja Haug:

> 'With each new migrant, the social capital at the place of destination increases for the potential successors. In the course of the migration process, the migration risk thus diminishes. Social capital declines at the place of origin, resulting in an attendant drop in the potential loss of social capital at the place of origin. Each emigrant increases the location specific social capital at the place of destination and this accumulation of location specific social capital at the place of destination reduces the opportunity costs of migration for successors. Additionally, staying at the place of destination becomes more attractive as a result of the rising social capital in kinship networks and the ethnic community.'[83]

Human Trafficking and Smuggling

The chain starts with the recruiters. The recruiters act as intermediaries between the migrants and those who will actually transport them across borders, although the chain may also involve other agencies such as money lenders, document forgers, and the owners or drivers/captains of boats.[84] The key to recruitment

A Theory of Fads, Fashion, Custom, and Culture Change as Informational Cascade, Journal of Political Economy 100/1992, pp. 992–1026; GIL S. EPSTEIN, *Herd and Network Effects in Migration Decision-making*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 34/2008, pp. 567–583.

80 G. S. EPSTEIN, *Herd and Network Effects*, pp. 567–583.

81 WILLIAM O'REILLY, *Strangers Come to Devour the Land: Changing Views of Foreign Migrants in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, Journal of Early Modern History 21/2017, pp. 153–187.

82 G. S. EPSTEIN, *Herd and Network Effects*, p. 580.

83 SONJA HAUG, *Migration Networks and Migration Decision-making*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 34/2008, pp. 585–605, p. 591.

84 A. M. WILLIAMS, V. BALÁŽ, *Migration, Risk and Uncertainty*, p. 147; PHILIP MARTIN, *Merchants of Labor*, Oxford 2017; MANOLO I. ABELLA, *The Role of Recruiters in Labor Migration*, in: International Migration: Prospects and Policies in a Global Market, (eds.) Douglas S. Massey, J. Edward Taylor, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2004 (https://oxford-

is winning the trust of potential migrants, which means that recruiters tend to live in the country or origin or the transit country and have at least a reasonable working knowledge of the migrants' language.[85] Sometimes recruiters know the migrants personally, and come with recommendations from friends and family who have previously been smuggled by these agencies. On other occasions, the migrant – perhaps trapped in a transit country – has no option but to trust smugglers whom they know little about. In these circumstances, 'recruiters prey on vulnerable persons and exploit their vulnerability. They often tempt people into migrating, misinforming them about both the process and the reality of the destination country.'[86]

In a period of general – rather than acute – decline, when localized, long-term strategies – other than migration – might have mitigated or moderated problems, migration became a mixed gamble: individuals had much to lose if they decided to uproot in order to seek the known positive returns elsewhere. For the majority, the idea of loss-aversion and endowment effects would explain why they remained on the less adventurous side of such a risk-laden decision. However, throughout the historiography, the predominating migrants are those who perceived decline as too entrenched to reverse – those who still faced poor choices because of where they lived or who they were. For them, network externalities offered a stable future, which successful migrants typically describe in terms of sustainable landholding. Poor choices caused strong network engagement; mixed choices did not. Micro-analysis in one area study from the 1830s–1840s, for instance, shows that those communities most responsive to migration networks were those with the least elastic local options for arresting decline. Given that emigration was confined to such communities, and despite the utility gains of life abroad (in this case study, in North America) being widely communicated by concentrated local networks, the prevailing emigration appears to be one patterned by loss aversion rather than utility gain.[87]

universitypressscholarship-com.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/10.1093/0199269009.001.0001/acprof-9780199269006-chapter-11).

85 ANNA GUHLICH, *Migration and Social Pathways*, Leverkusen 2017, pp. 155–159.

86 UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC), *A Short Introduction to Migrant Smuggling*, UNDOC Issue paper, http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Issue-Papers/Issue_Paper_-_A_short_introduction_to_migrant_smuggling.pdf, p. 14.

87 For local agricultural intensification, see DAVID W. SABEAN, *Property, Production and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870*, New York 1990, pp. 50–52, 433–451; NIELS GRÜNE, *Dorfgesellschaft, Konflikterfahrung, Partizipationskultur: Sozialer Wandel und politische Kommunikation in Landgemeinden der badischen Rheinpfalz (1720–1850)*, Stuttgart 2011, pp. 126–172. JAMES

The continued depression of wealth and status below a given reference point at, or near, early migration centers, caused risk seeking through the conduit of migration networks. However, when decline was less acute structurally or moderated locally, loss aversion and endowment effects prevented most from engaging with emigration. This process is observable across the growth of the migration system. At times when subsistence crises, and accompanying poor choices, visited broad swathes of a region, the pull of migration networks began to spread geographically and intensify where it was already extant.[88]

Only when social, informational, and infrastructure networks reduce the risks of emigration to their lowest point, does widespread emigration occur in the face of rising incomes and internal migration alternatives. In Germany in the later 19th century, for instance, these latter factors quickly dampened Atlantic migration from the 1880s onward, as prospective income ratios narrowed, though never coming close to parity. At each step in the account of why some emigrants decided to leave, others chose to stay, and the number of migration choices rose and fell, prospect theory offers an explanation of the trade-off between structural conditions and networks more nuanced than an explanation based largely on utility gains. At the very least, in the German case, the movement sees a temporal interplay between the two, with the former appearing in much stronger effect until the final peak in emigration.[89]

In attempting to approach a new understanding of migration, the motivation for migration, decision making in migration and the role of risk and risk avoidance in the process of migration, how helpful then is prospect theory in aiding our study of emigration? In examining the case for Britain, for instance, successive generations of historians have maintained that 'only in the impossible world of economic abstractions could the *desire* to move be conceived of as mere economic opportunity: the *threat* of a downward spiral in social status and concern over social instability at home, or even family conflict, rather than an overwhelming urge to improve job opportunities might, in the final analysis, prove to be a primary stimulant to emigrant decision making.'[90]

BOYD, *The Role of Rural Textile Production in Southwest German Emigration: Württemberg Communities in the Early 19th Century*, Textile History 46/2015, pp. 28–49.

88 In this case, in the late 1840s and early 1850s in the German Confederation.

89 In push-pull vernacular, Kamphoefner, writing of the German Northwest, characterizes the emigration as largely 'push' until the American civil war.

90 ROBIN HAINES, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor: Australian Recruitment in Britain and Ireland, 1831–60*, London 1997, pp. 8–9. Haines cites a lineage of skepticism from Frank Thistlethwaite to Charlotte Erickson to Bernard Bailyn regarding utility theory in migration history, based largely on econometrics and assumptions about 'economic man' (287). See especially

The protracted socio-economic crisis and trauma that accompanied much European emigration in the nineteenth century provides abundant migrant testimony for the interplay between risk seeking, poor choices, and networks to be examined. Although conditions across Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe do not present the same descriptive opportunities, Italy, Habsburg Europe, and the Russian Empire were subject to migration fever in the early 1880s. The onset of emigration from these regions displays the characteristics of cascade effects, but a determination of the extent to which influences of loss aversion or utility gain lay behind subsequently sustained engagement would require extensive structural investigation. In every instance, however, an examination of reference-dependent conditions during the inception and growth curve of migration, alongside migrant testimony, might yield significant information about the dynamics of decision making at given points in the migratory system.[91]

Conclusions

Greater research on the role of decision making, risk and the usefulness of prospect theory, offers a compelling theoretical framework for testing both unexpected and one-off migration events and sustained emigration. It affords historians of migration the opportunity to analyze past events within a framework provided by behavioural as well as classical economics. While some historians have anticipated the cogency of this approach even before behavioural economics had even been codified as a theoretical discipline, historians could gain even more from incorporating this approach into their research of migrations in history. Prospect theory describes risk-seeking behaviour that is consistent with inaugurating and sustaining a climate of migration fever, and, alongside cascade effects, the psychological influences that subsequently weighed heavily on risk-based decisions. Even for the more stable periods that followed such peaks in

Thistelthwaite, below, note 48; also CHARLOTTE ERICKSON, *Explanatory Models in Immigration and Migration Research*, in: Scando-Americana Papers on Scandinavian Emigration to the United States, (eds.) Ingrid Semmingsen, Per Seyersted, Oslo 1980, p. 19.

91 Literature in this area is vast, and continues to grow; see, *inter alia*, FELIX WIEDEMANN, *Migration and Narration: How European Historians in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries Told the History of Human Mass Migrations or Völkerwanderungen*, History and Theory 59/2020, no. 1, pp. 42–60; MARJORY HARPER, *Obstacles and Opportunities: Labour Emigration to the 'British World' in the Nineteenth Century*, Continuity and Change 34/2019, no. 1, pp. 43–62; MARGIT FAUSER, ANNE FRIEDRICHS, LEVKE HARDERS, *Migrations and Borders: Practices and Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Century*, Journal of Borderlands Studies 34/2019, no. 4, pp. 483–488.

out-migration, it provides a psychological spectrum with and in which decisions to leave – risk seeking – and to stay – risk avoidance – were made, enriching the analytical prism through which the decision making process of migrants tended to pass. Alongside network theory, it offers historians a tool for the behavioural analysis of migration beyond utility, which by describing only labour and financial maximization as a motivating factor, may not reflect the reality against which real-life decisions were, and continue to be, made.[92] As contemporary historians come to grapple with the challenges of explaining contemporary migrations, and historians of earlier periods continue to research the movement of people before the modern period, every analytical framework affords historians an opportunity for more comprehensive study of the past. A more interdisciplinary approach to the study of migration, in the past and in the present, could allow economists, sociologists and others to learn from historians, using historic data sets to test their models of decision making and risk assessment. Theories of decision making and risk tend to be just that, theories, and are rarely validated. More work is needed on cases of both small-scale migration and on large-scale movement, to further test the application of theories of decision making in the historical past. Taking cases for which we have detailed sources, including the Huguenot diaspora, the expulsion of Salzburg Protestants, trans-Atlantic migration in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and many others, may well lead to fruitful findings. Using historical data sets would enable researchers to test the validity of their theories and would potentially give historians a new and interesting insight into historical migrants, while enabling social scientists to see their studies in the long view.

92 W. O'REILLY, J. BOYD, *Prospect Theory, Cascade Effects, and Migration*; FRANK THISTLETHWAITE, *Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* XI[e] Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Rapports, 5/1960, pp. 32–60; repr. in: *A Century of European Migrations 1830–1930*, (eds.) RUDOLPH J. VECOLI, SUZANNE M. SINKE, Urbana 1991, pp. 17–45, 40–43. On Network Theory, see HEIN DE HASS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies 36/2010, no. 10, pp. 1587–1617; MIROSLAV BAHNA, *Intra-EU Migration from Slovakia: An Evaluation of New Economics of Labour Migration and Migrant Networks Theories*, European Societies 15/2013, no. 3, pp. 388–407; KENNETH D. ROBERTS, MICHAEL D. S. MORRIS, *Fortune, Risk, and Remittances: An Application of Option Theory to Participation in Village-Based Migration Networks*, The International Migration Review 37/2003, no. 4, pp. 1252–1281.