

### Summary of readings: Migration, Diaspora and Transnationalism

Migration, usually being divided into international and internal ones, denotes any movement of human from one location to another. There are many extensively migrations throughout history, in both occasional or permanent manner, depending on historical setting, circumstance and perspective. Migration is an aggregation of individual behaviours into the social forms, usually not being explained by a single or constant theory as it is a combined competing paradigm with trade-offs between differentiated pull and push factors in distinct circumstances involving some sort of empirical orientation. Ravenstein's 'Law of migration', noticed some similarities of migration caused by economic development in the nineteenth centuries, for examples, it stated that large towns were grow by migration more than natural increases, and the theory concluded that migration is always related to economic income maximization. Michael Todaro(1960s) correlated the concept to the income difference between rural and urban area and regard it as the main factor of migrational movement, in which people would migrant for better paid occupation or job opportunity. Everette Lee(1996), on the other hand, linked the initiatives of migration to the mutual concessions of pull and push factors, considering people desires with reference to different economic, cultural and political factors. Skeldon(1997) further explained that the migrants' preference are not only regarding to profit-maximization but also risk minimization through family networks to perpetuating the migration flow, together with access to labour markets and claimed it as the 'new economics of migration'. The risk minimization approach was built upon the segmented market theory which consists of varies sub-groups and hierachy of labours, with different remuneration or fringe benefits, and it is the decision of migrants to choose where to settle. Another strategy the writer gave is family network in which migrants were settled for generations and the risk of unintended consequences would be minimized.

The world system theory, by Immanuel Wallerstein, suggested that migration is driven by the global economy through the expansion of Europe by setting up colonies from fifteen century, and resulting in the recent globalization of transnational corporations. There is a core and periphery relationship between European and other, where western countries are seen as leaders of urbanization, therefore this theory is being criticized as Euro-centric bias.

Associated with the increasing migrating populations, there leads a 'Global migration crisis', threatening the sovereignty and cultural integrity of the destination hosts. Migration is often associated with international movements, therefore there may be underlying problems of social or ethnical conflict along with national safety and identity crisis. Migrants, for instance, the political refugee of China may result in social unrest by either seeking institutional alternatives of their own motherlands or their hosts, leading to ethnical and political conflicts. Economic migrants who search for benefits from their host may alter the government decision in infrastructures for the native residents, resulting in unequal distribution of social resources and social burdens. Immigrants, for example colonialists, usually imposed their own living styles to the migration destinations, therefore cultural hegemony will be formed as result. Diasporas may monopolized the economy of their hosts, broadening the rich-poor gap, causing lots of unintended social problems such as racial discrimination, slow down of economic growth, cultural imperialism or economic hegemony. And the problem of diasporas is a serious social issue many countries is facing.

The term 'Diaspora', used to be referred specifically to the populations of Jews exiled from Judea by the Babylonians and Roman Empire, has primarily been associated to mass migration of an ethnic population being forced away from its native homelands, induced and dispersed to other corners of the globe usually by political forces(Cohen 1996). Unlike voluntary migrants, diasporas appear to

emphasize a compulsory component and rootless identity, diasporas communities often being depicted as victims of involuntary migration by theorists. However, Cohen(1996) and Skeldon(1997) suggested that diasporas approach need to be modified because diasporas communities are not necessarily be victims nowadays as they hold a more active role in creating a new 'culture of exile' which is a kind of strong bonds among the ethnic community and idealized concept of home culture neither be a original nor destination ones. Diasporic communities nowadays have largely altered their way of life to the suiting of their chosen contexts and developed an embiguous force in the society. A de-territorialized identity and link with the land of origin has always been the nature of diasporic identities, they are no longer suppressed ethnic minorities, instead they participate in the economy and society in destination areas and are obviously important to the hosts. There are various ways of thinking about the configuration of transnational diasporas, Sanguin(1994) explained that diasporas could be applied to those ethnic comes from countries where there is still misery, overpopulation, insecurity, dictatorship or religious or racial discrimination, therefore it maybe western-centric biased. Moreover, this word usually represent Oriental or African minorities like Chinese or Indian and is seldom used to describe occidental migrants away from their motherlands, thus the word itself may contain some sense of class discrimination and stereotyping. Diaspora is also a too generalized concept for representing the whole group, not all antecedents of these people were forced to move away from homeland, in doing so, it may not appropriate to use nowadays, instead, transnational ethnic minorities may be more suitable to describe this type of people.

Diaspora nowadays somehow no longer only centred on passive involuntary migration but evolved into some new concepts about trading diasporas in 1990s indicated any ethnic groups formed by network of trading communities living in

dispersal and yet highly interdependent. They are regarded as 'stranger merchants' established with a 'host society'. Seldon thought that the continued presence of diasporas sometimes be viewed as a threat in the aspect of national security, because these people may seek to destabilize the government in their own area, creating problems within the international system between host and original government. On the other hand, diasporas may to a certain extent, improve the economy of their host countries for example, the dominant economic role of Chinese diasporas in Indonesia.

International and internal migrants or diasporas often believed to be having significant impacts on developments because they give rise to transfer of technological improvement and idea inspiration. To cite an example, German scientists and engineers exiled after WWII had significant impacts in later missile and space programmes in USA and USSR. Kotkin(1993) used the statement 'the making of global tribes' to describe the influence to the world by British diasporas that moving out to exploit new opportunities, therefore the expansion of diasporic groups not only responsible for transnationalistic global cultural and economic flow between a core 'home' and periphery 'away', but also raises critical issues of identity and political participation. According to Skeldon, the refugees gave a tremendous boost to urban growth in the immediate post-war period in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. However, migration did not cause the rapid development of the East Asian economies and does not rank with the macro-political and economic factors that are so often cited, migration is neither a panacea nor a threat but holding a interrelation which economic development and underdevelopment shape migration, migration, in turn, shapes development, as both concepts often related to the pull and push factors of migration. The key question is how governments can use international migration as a development tool.

The transition theory provides a modernity view on movement of rural-urban

demographic transition in which there is a noticeable transition from high fertility to low fertility and mortality, there is also a shift of economic based activities from agriculture to industrial based, and was seen as a development transition. Another changes transition theory suggest is the mobility transition of which migration is always two-way, there is always a combination of internal and international migration executing together. The strength of this approach is that it combines different types of movements within a single framework and the theory is being criticized as following a old myth of immobility and it is unreasonable to link mobility change to demographic transition. There is also postmodernist approach to give an antithesis generalization of migration, which migration is being seen as the fundamental experience of movement for creation of new cultures, erodes the created identities and make a new and more consistent ones, through the transnational movement from one place to another. In this way, migrants are believed to be individuals but not as decision-makers of the behavioural approach. Postmodernists use vanguard migration flows of exile, identity and experience as key concepts to reflect the subjective view of migrant as an individual and show the emphasis has shifted from national towards more university experience, in the post-colonial world, described by Said(1993), it created a global independent community while at the same time allowing people to believe that they belong to only one part of that community as whites or blacks, orientals or westerners. The opinion of postmodernists give risk to a concept of transnationalism heightened interconnectivity between people all around the world and the loosening of boundaries between countries, by global flow of people, ideas, technologies and goods, this phenomenon is not regard as new developed ones as people always move throughout history, bringing different culture to different places. However, its effects are exaggerated by recent globalization.

The rural-urban migration in East Asia has been accompanied by a degree of

integration in labor markets. The issue of labour scarcity has historically been a problem for capitalists attempting to realize an area's full potential level of accumulation. Field(1994) witness two major phrase in labour market development, the first phrase is increasing employment with constant wages, then followed by a full employment and with rapidly rising real wages. The more recent migration is believed to be driven by 'newly-decentralized economies' which declines of labour-intensive manu-facturing in the urban area and the growth of low paid service sector jobs has resulted in a significantly flow of migrants from third world to take up these unwanted jobs. Take Hong Kong as a case, sojourners from Philippines or Indonesia usually employed for relatively low-paid domestic household work, while all well-paid managerial jobs were held by local citizens. On the other hand, excessive migration would be served as a push factor inevitably lead to a break down of local culture, more and more Philipino culture is spreading to Hong Kong. What evident is that the migrants do not simply disconnect the economic from the cultural, explaining why migrants don't just simply cut ties with their places of origin. This is not sentimental, but as a result of experiences they develop in the places they migrate to and how their identities interplay between economic and cultural factors which anthropology can illuminate. Therefore, notions of transnationalism are really about a lack of borders, and people put a strong investment in one place as a result of the other.

Reference:

Skeldon, Ronald. 1997. *Migration and Development: A Global Propective*. Harlow. Longman. P. 17-40