

## **Application of Structuration Theory to the Phenomenon of International Migration**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines migration theories and finds out the application of Anthony Giddens's structuration theory to international migration. Neoclassical (macro) theory, new economics theory, dual labor market, and the world-system are more centralized in the structure. Neoclassical (micro) theory focuses more on the individual without structure. The problems of the structure-agency debate do not serve to investigate social reality, but partial social reality digs out. These theories do not bridge the structure and agency for studying international migration. Structure-dominant migration theories conceptualize a system as a stable action pattern made by interdependent parts or elements. These theories ignored the homeostatic causal loops of system and self-regulation through feedback and conceptual weakness in structure as a stable pattern. Still, the structure is also generative rules and resources. The role of allocative resources and authoritative resources in migration studies has been shadowed. Actor-dominant migration theories do not cover the individual face-to-face interaction with group and collective action, collective action influences the individual interaction and behavior of the migration. These theories also focus on consciousness but do not focus on reflective consciousness, practical consciousness, and unconscious consciousness.*

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## **Introduction**

The migration began with human civilization as a social process. It is an essential process for human existence. Now, it has become a global movement. In Migration studies, various theories were developed and are being developed in bracketing disciplinary demarcation like economists, demographers, geographers, etc have distinct approaches (Castle, 2008). Each discipline has its distinct theories of migration. The nature and trend of migration are more different than in past times. The present time is the global migration age. Classical theories cannot properly address the current migration situation (Massey, et al. 1998) because the nature of migration is global movement. There is a need for integrative theories to study and understand international migration. Debate on objectivism and subjectivism was found in social science in the past, efforts are made to bridge micro and macro aspects, and new theories and methods are frequently developed in social science. Similarly, migration theories are more centralized separately on each structure and agency. Some migration theorists focus on structure beyond human agency like push-pull theory, neoclassical economics macro, and world-system theory and other scholars focus more on the individual without structure like neoclassical economics micro, rational choice theory. The problems of the structure-agency debate do not serve to investigate social reality, but partial social reality digs out. Classical migration theories include functionalism, structuralism, system theory, and micro theory. These theories do not bridge the structure for the study of international migration (Bakewell, 2010). The relevance of past theories is questionable in changing contexts. They only reflect some parts of social reality. They do not answer questions like is the migration is structured or is structuring both processes. So, structure and agency are not separable things but they are interdependent. de Hass (2014) criticizes that migration theories are still under theorizing and lacking a comprehensive

theoretical framework. Meso theory like the network theory of migration has remained underdeveloped.

The semiperiphery and core states draw migrants from the periphery states due to certain characteristics. State actors are reduced by world-system theory to products of the capitalist world system's replication. A capitalistic world economic system makes a global structure that is the single division of labour (Wallerstein, 1974). Wallerstein focuses on that the global structure plays the crucial role for the international migration phenomena. The decision to migrate is predicated on the paradigm of reasonable people acting in response to the opportunity to increase income through migration (Sjaastad, 1964). Only the economic factors that influence migration are taken into account by rational choice theory's methodological individualism. It ignores the influence of the global market's structure on each person's characteristics and interactions. People's ability to reflect on their circumstances and make changes is a reflexive talent. Human agency, sometimes referred to as transformative potential, refers to people's fundamental capacity to carry out actions rather than their intentions, the ability to change things. Faist (2000) argues that the agency of migrants and non-migrants continues to be crucial for the development of social science theory on migration and the formulation of migration policy. Giddens (1984) explains the resources, which are two kinds of resources: authoritative resources originate from the coordination of human agents' actions, whereas allocative resources originate from control over tangible objects or components of the natural world (Giddens, 1984). So, structure and agency are not separable things but they are interdependent.

Therefore, The main research questions of this paper are: What is the main assumption of structure and agency in migration theories? What are the major weaknesses of migration theories in terms of structure and agency? What are the applications of structuration theory in the study of international migration?

The theoretical concepts generated from Giddens's book like *The Constitution of Society* and King's (2012) Working Paper on Migration theories have been reviewed based on the structure and actors' dominance. The weakness of migration theories has been analyzed, after that the relevancies of Giddens's structuration theory to studying international migration have been presented.

This article is divided into five sections. First is the introduction. then there is the explanation of assumption of structure and agency in migration theories, weaknesses of migration theories in terms of structure and agency, the applications of structuration theory, and the conclusion.

### **Assumption of Structure and Agency in Migration Theories**

Giddens (1984) defines that structure is both the medium and outcome of the social practices they recursively organize. It is not only a constraint of individual actors but also enabling individual actions. It helps to produce and reproduce practice and vice versa. The agency is the capability of individual actors to mediate in the course of events by using their knowledgeable understanding of the circumstances of their actions. Actors are knowledgeable persons who act according to the analysis of their surrounding circumstances. Actors have both practical agency and discursive agency. Actors use the practical agency for the maintaining of the everyday life and use the discursive agency for the challenge and change the social norms and structure.

The role of structure and the actor in migration are being studied separately in the migration theories, but the structure and the actor are not being made separately. In this section, the migration theories are discussed based on the prioritization of structures and actors, from Revesten's Law.

Ravenstein's (1889) Law of Migration states that migration occurs due to structure. The country's residents who live closest to a town experiencing rapid expansion move there, filling the void in the rural population created by these migrants from farther-flung areas. Long-distance migrants

typically choose to settle in one of the major industrial and commercial hubs. He mentioned that migration occurs due to distance, rural and urban structure, commercial structure, and technological structure (Ravenstein, 1889, as cited in Lee, 1966:48). It seems that the role of the migrant worker is considered secondary.

Lee (1966) identified the four factors in the act of migration. These are: push factors, pull factors, intervening obstacles, and personal factors. Push factors include a lack of chances and jobs, primitive circumstances desertification, drought or starvation, fear or persecution on a political level, forced labor or slavery, inadequate medical facilities, threats of death, absence of freedom of religion or politics, inadequate land, racial discrimination, and civil War.

Pull factors include better living circumstances, work prospects, freedom of religion or politics, pleasure, education facilities, health care facilities, better climate, industry, ties to family, and security increased. Intervening obstacles are physical distance, travel expenses, cultural barriers like language and lifestyle differences, and political barriers like immigration laws. Personal factors include age, sex, race, and educational status of persons. Personal sensitivities, intelligence, and awareness level of the person determine the migration decision (Lee, 1966). Lee links the structure and the agent to the four elements necessary for the migration act. Push and pull factors cannot perform migration acts alone. There is an important role of individual choice and discretion. It advances the recognition that migration is caused by both actors and structures.

Lee's theory was followed by neoclassical economics theory (King, 2012). It covers both macro and micro aspects. Neo-classical economics macro theory broadly views the causes of international migration as structural factors such as differences in wage rates between countries, labour market mechanisms, the government's role in controlling migration, etc. Workers migrating from low-wage to high-wage economies is the structural reason

not individual actions. At the micro level, migration is the consequence of choices made by 'rational actors' who consider the advantages and disadvantages of the destination places (Massey et al., 1998). Domination of countries' economic structure and labour market structure are the main causes of international migration in the neoclassical economic macro theory. It is so extremely advocated for the structure. Similarly, neo-classical micro theory is also extremely advocated for individual actions (de Hass, 2011). Ignoring the influence of economic accumulation and social structure on personal choice and decision, the structural factor becomes overshadowed. A cost-benefit analysis by actor/individual is done by the individual or by the structure. Therefore, it seems to ignore the fact that individuals and structure are not separate things go through together.

Wilbur Zelinsky's 'Motivation Transition Hypothesis' (1971) considers the structural aspect as a factor in migration. The main argument that structural changes shape the amount and nature of migration is that structure is paramount. Wilbur Zelinsky's 'Motivation Transition Hypothesis' (1971) considers the structural aspect as a factor in migration. The main argument that structural changes shape the volume and trend of migration is that structure is paramount.

Jelinsky's five-stage migration and mobility patterns, like premodern traditional societies, early transitional societies, late transitional societies, advanced societies, and future advanced societies, etc. are changing structural stages. So it is a structural dominant theory of migration.

The new economics of migration theory considers household decisions as the cause of international migration. Household members migrate by making collective decisions to increase income and reduce risk. Government policies and risk diversification strategies in insurance, capital markets, and futures markets often lead to international migration (Stark, 1984). It is also a structural preference theory as the migration occurs due to household dominance, and family capacity.

Dual labour market theory argues that international labor migration is largely based on the demand of developed countries. Rich countries get their secondary labor market from migrant workers. The structure of labor markets in rich countries leads to international labor migration. International labor migration occurs by the pull factor like cheap labour for the developed countries. The economic structure of developed nations creates an enduring need for immigrant labor, which drives international migration (Piore, 1979). This theory is also a structural dominant theory as international labor migration is largely based on labor market structure in developed countries

World-system theory considers the expansion and development of the capitalist system as the main cause of international migration. The development of the world-system leads to a single division of labor. Rich countries supply highly skilled manpower and poor countries supply unskilled manpower. Capital and labor mobility in the world-system is high. The core-periphery interdependent relationship, like capitalist cultural practice, ceases. Consumption practices and habits force migration. Wallerstein categorized nations based on their standing within the global market economy: core, semi-periphery and periphery. New international division of labor, the semi-periphery refers to nations with intermediate levels of wealth and interdependence. (Wallerstein, 1974). Core countries like America, Japan, France, etc. export cheap labour for the semi-periphery and periphery countries. Similarly, those core countries import cheap labour, semi-skilled labour and unskill labour from the semi-periphery and periphery. The world-system is considered a factor for international migration, so, world-system theory is the structure dominant theory.

### **Weaknesses of International Migration Theories**

Macro-level theories have great importance, they frequently lack a behavioral link to the micro-level due to their extremely macro-level character. The authors fail to clarify the behavioral presumptions that

support the macro-level correlations they either assume or describe. Conflating macro-level migration determinants (such as population growth, environmental degradation, climate change, or variability) with individual migration motives would be a classic ecological fallacy (de Hass, 2011). He suggested that to link migration aspirations to people's life goals and spatial opportunities, rather than just income or salary differentials. and to consider migration propensities concerning people's migration capabilities and ambitions.

When migrant networks are the main focus, other feedback processes that are influenced by migration in both the sending and receiving contexts are often overlooked. In sending and receiving groups and societies, migration invariably modifies the original structural conditions that allow for movement. These changes in turn have a reciprocal effect on people's ambitions and capacity for migration (de Hass, 2011).

**Table 1: Weaknesses of the theory of migration are presented in the table below**

<b>Structure Dominant Theory of International Migration</b>	<b>Actor-Dominant Theory of International Migration</b>
Focus on structure beyond human agency	Focus on individuals without structure
Focus on the system is the interdependence of action, but ignoring the system is considered as self-regulation through feedback, reflexive self-regulation	Rational choice theory ignores the structure & more focuses on economic reasons, The Individual as a profit maker
More focus on stable pattern of action but ignore generative rules &resources, production & reproduction of society.	Ignore the role of discursive consciousness, practical consciousness, and unconscious activities
Less attention toward the role of agency in shaping the structure	Ignore the role of structure in human action, the structure is a



	constraint and enables of human actions
More focus on structure as preexisted, structured, produced, constituted	More focus on structure as preexisted, structured, produced, constituted
Neglect the actor's role in the use of rules and resources	Less attention toward the existence of structure in an actor's memory trace
More focus on mechanized systems and ignoring the elements of agents	Ignore the person interaction to access the structure and use modality

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Source: Developed from the migration theories.

While reviewing the theories of migration, those theories have mentioned the causes rather than the effects. When the reasons for migration are complete, it leaves a certain impact on the society. In the optimistic theories of migration, neoclassical economic macro theory talks about migration to places where wages are high, so it seems that immigrants go to earn more. It can be assumed that the income will be good for the family. This theory is silent on the impact of family, but the neoclassical economic micro theory mentions that the individual's discretionary actions lead to migration. It is said that the difference in wages is more important than the difference in wages because immigration is carried out with a deep accounting of benefits and costs. The former emphasizes only the structure while the latter theory emphasizes only the individual. Family is not mentioned anywhere. The former has strengthened the trend of positivism while the latter has strengthened the explanatory trend. One is a broad principle and the other is a subtle principle. It seems difficult to find real and objective facts about the effects of immigration from the theories that emphasize the economic aspects of two different streams, structuralism and individualism.

Historically pessimistic migration theories view migration as bad. He said that its effect is negative. Their basic theoretical ideal was Marxism. It has mentioned the effects of exploitation, labor migration, increasing dependency, and unequal labor exchange. These principles succeeded in fostering a larger structure. There is a lack of understanding of how social procedural structures are built, destroyed, and rebuilt.

The evolutionary immigration theoretical sect brought an optimistic view of immigration. It has been mentioned that the money earned abroad will develop subtly in the families and communities of the immigrants. Although it is a sect that looks positively at the effect of referrals, it does not show any interest in how the agencies of people use referrals correctly and how they can be properly utilized through continuous practice.

The sect that views immigration from a pessimistic point of view gave rise to the Cumulative Causation School to criticize it. There are dual labor market theory, segmental labor market theory, network theory, immigration system theory, etc. that emphasize the structure. They have also neglected the activity and creativity of the individual.

Recently, global theories of behavior and international theories have also emphasized the structure, and how those structures were structured, and continue to be, have been neglected (Bakewell, 2010).

Thus, looking at the impact of foreign employment in a separate form of both individuals and structures, only a partial truth is revealed. If you look at the fact that both complement each other based on the structuration theory, you can get real and objective facts. In the underlying relationship between the structure and the actor, social behavior takes place and the social system is formed. With the migration of husbands for foreign employment, wives at home rebuild family structures and routines, and through daily communication behaviors between family members, the structure is formed in a way that assimilates new roles and autonomy.

Theories of migration have included structure and agency only superficially. Some approaches are seen as too deterministic. They have weakly presented people's choices, decisions and behavior. The theorists who emphasize structure have neglected the desires, wants, and feelings of the individual (Bakewell, 2010).

Giddens (1984) recognized that social activities often involve day-to-day routines. Emigrant wives create and reinforce routines. By doing this, their behavior becomes established. Giddens calls this 'ontological security' meaning that actors feel secure and comfortable in roles in their world that are meaningful to them.

### **The Application of Structuration Theory**

Giddens (1984) makes the daily behavior of people based on three consciousnesses. The first is 'ontological security' meaning that people feel assured and comfortable with their role in the life world that is meaningful to them. People find past roles and routines reassuring and comfortable and motivated by them to provide basic ontological security. Looking at the behavior of the family members who have gone to foreign employment, the motivation to re-enforce the past roles and routines of the family members is ontological security. It disturbs the members' sense of ontological security. The characteristics of this theory are: There is a duality, not a dualism, between structure and agency. Structure and agency are interrelated in the process. Social behavior and relationships are produced and reproduced. Finally, unconscious elements are involved in the production and reproduction of social behavior and relationships. Functionalism and structuralism prioritize social objects or structures over social subjects or agencies. Social structure is not external to social action. A person's memory trace can save structure. If the individual does not practice socialization, the structure becomes abstract. Thus, social structure is an internal element of social behavior and action.

Giddens (1984) tries to see social structure as a process. In social analysis, structure refers to the structural properties of different behavior in social systems according to time and place. This makes it possible to integrate similar social practices in different periods. Time and place give those practices a 'systematic' form. Time and space are specially arranged social practices. According to Giddens, the social system is a system that reproduces social relations along with time and space made up of social actors.

Unconscious elements are involved in the production and reproduction of social relations. The actor may not be conscious of every behavior and social activity, although they can communicate their motives and reasons through their logic and reasoning. As an active agent, the actor brings about social change by taking action. They do careful accounting of actions. They carefully account for their own and others' actions. Social change will not come if you are always doing the same behavior and actions. People are doing new behaviors and relationships for their convenience. Thus, while doing these behaviors and actions, the actor does not know the environment or condition of those behaviors or actions. The outcome is not known. Unexpected consequences of that behavior may also come. In this situation, he is ready to do new behaviors. It is intended. This situation is being worked on by ontological security. He examines social and cultural contexts and analyzes rationality. He is aware of what has been done by the doer. It is also called practical consciousness. We can assume the application of structuration theory in international migration as:

- International Migration depends on the mutual relation of human action and structure.
- International Migration depends on personal interaction to access the structure and use modality
- The duality of structure and agency (capability of doing things, not intention) are the cause of international migration

- Person produces/reproduces a set of international migration practices through 3 dimensions of interaction which are below the table.

**Table 2: International Migration based on the Structure-Modality-Interaction Interplay**

<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Sanction</b>
<b>Modality</b>	Interpretative skill	Facility (capacity)	norms
<b>Structure</b>	signification (effective use of language)	Domination(Allocative control & authoritative)	Legitimation (moral rules)

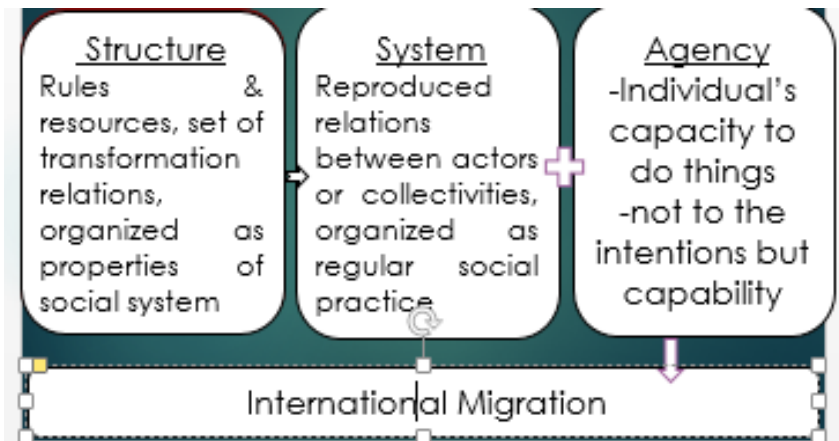
Source: Giddens (1984)

Social practices' fundamental recursiveness, which is that structure serves as a vehicle for and results from the replication of practices. Constructed at the producing moments of this constitution, structure 'exists' concurrently with the constitution of the agent and social practices (Giddens, 1984).

***The duality of structure***

Migration is structuring across time and space. Structures are both the means and the result of the practices of behavior that constitute the social system. People shape the structure. Structures are both the means and the result of the practices of behavior that constitute the social system. People shape the structure. They direct and determine their behavior from the structure they have built. It determines what and how people.

**Figure 1: Interrelationship among Structure, System and Agency**



Source: Giddens (1984)

He contends that structure allows for the 'knowledgeable' agent to operate in ways that are constructive or innovative. structure plays a role in international migration. The information enables an individual and thus a 'knowledgeable' agent about international migration to act in creative or creative ways. Social structure is made up of the principles that give rise to activity rather than the pattern of behavior.

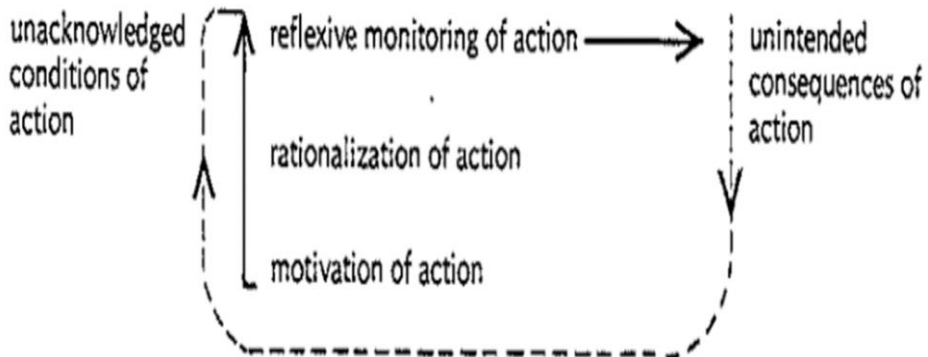
International migration depends on rules and resources. International migration is established as a social system when the act of migration is repeated. When such behavior is repeated, the social system. It keeps on reproducing. Structures related to interplanetary migration exist only as memory traces, the biological basis of human knowledge, and ephemerality in action.

### ***Reproduction of Intranaitonal Migration***

A first-time international migrant engages in a different type of work than he or she has always done. On the one hand, they are bound by new or unprecedented behavior and on the other hand by unintended/unintended consequences of actions. The actions of unidentified international migrants

may not seem rational, but they do so in a conscious manner. After this practice is done repeatedly and its results are good, it is gradually practiced again and again. which reproduces the structure.

**Figure 2: Process of joining action by actors & reproduction of social relationship**



Source: Giddens (1984)

The factor of international migration is known by analyzing the intelligence and ability of the actor. The cause of international migration can be known only by analyzing the actions performed by the actors according to the time and circumstances, and new behaviors or actions which have not been done in the past, which do not have the expected magnitudes. It is a predetermined or structured structural reason that migration occurs when wages are high. It cannot know the real reality. Social change is almost impossible if you are always doing pre-established or structured actions. As the practice of international migration continues due to the new actions of individuals, it becomes established as a social system.

International migrations stem from actors' roles in the use of rules and resources. The production and reproduction of social system through actor's use of rules and resources- International migrations stem by constraint, reflexivity and consciousness. Social life is reproduced through

the knowledge of human beings. Knowledge consists of three elements. Similarly, international migration depends on the actor's three types of knowledge. These are ontological security, practical consciousness, and discursive consciousness. Ontological security is an individual view on own place, worldview, and feeling comfortable, The host society reestablishes ontological security by knowing structural forces. Practical consciousness is known as people unconsciously monitoring the events occurring around them. Unconscious recognition of the events and structure, the long-term structure that is in place (structure). Discursive consciousness is known as people being able to give a coherent account of their activities and reason for them. The respondent narrates the experience of the host society (agency).

Tammaru and Sjoberg (1999) recommend using a structuration theory when conducting migration studies. The use of this theory makes it easy to understand the inner motives and intentions of immigrants. The intrinsic and qualitative aspects of international migration are exposed.

Individual migrants act as informed actors within pre-existing, legally recognized institutions. These networks offer a collection of data that aids prospective migrants in determining whether moving would enhance their perceived possibilities or utility function (Goss and Lindquist, 1995).

### **Conclusion**

The duality of structure and agency (capability of doing things, not intention) are the causes of international migration. A deeper understanding of international migration can be done based on the duality of structure and agency.

Halfacree (1995) uses structuration theory in the study of migration. Its use facilitates the analysis of domestic migration and the structure of patriarchy in terms of structural duality. He emphasized the importance of the duality of structures in the immigration decision-making process. He emphasizes



that migration is not just a simple cost-benefit analysis, but is influenced by broader social issues.

Based on this, it is useful to easily analyze the objective and subjective reality associated with international migration. Structuration theory is very useful for analyzing how international migrants, produce and reproduce migration structure and are directed by this system. It also helps to analyze the re-create and reproduce social structure by actor as knowledgeable persons-creators. Agents produce, and reproduce of the practices and behaviors related to international migration, that are ignored by structuralists. It is more useful to balance the extremism of positivists and individualists in the theory of international migration and to establish the recognition that these two are integral parts of each other. It can fill the missing truths of theories of international migration which are ignored by both extremists. Structuration theory is more important to complete the incomplete knowledge created by international migration theory. Structuration theory is more important in completing the incomplete knowledge created by international migration theory. International migration phenomena are not only pattern behavior and not only structured behavior. But these behaviors or practices are structuring and patterning through time and space.

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