

World System-Linkages and International Migration:
New Directions In Theory and Method,
With an Application to Canada¹

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The "World System" perspective of Wallerstein (1974) and arguments of other Marxian writers such as Amin (1976) in the Dependency School have significantly reoriented contemporary theoretical models of international migration, particularly with respect to labour flows between underdeveloped and developed nations. Migration theories based on the World System view sparked a wave of new macro-structural analyses of the global expansion of capitalism, the internationalization of markets, the spread of multi-national firms, and the multiple effects of trends in the transfer of capital, technology and profits on migration between nations (e.g., Petras, 1981; Portes, 1979, 1983; Sassen-Koob, 1983). These studies conclude that system consequences for employment and income in migrant sending and receiving nations are multiple and interconnected. Peasant farmers in developing countries are displaced by international export oriented agriculture (mechanized monoculture), while seasonal jobs open up for them as farm labourers and less skilled service workers in developed nations. Manufacturing jobs are "exported" from developed countries to newly industrializing nations where wages are low (and often kept low by authoritarian governments), while skilled managerial, scientific and administrative jobs are retained in the wealthy nations where, due to high minimum wages and extensive welfare systems, "underground" employment opportunities arise to stimulate undocumented (illegal) international migration.

The World System perspective also sparked numerous micro-level analyses of household and family migration (e.g., Massy and Garcia Espana,

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1987; Pessar, 1982; Soto, 1987; Turner and Simmons, 1987). These studies point to the emergence of the "trans-national" family as part of "survival" and "mobility" strategies, in which Third World households adapt to declining economic opportunity by inserting one or more members on either a temporary or permanent basis abroad in a First World sector of relative greater opportunity.

While the World System approach has energized and reoriented International migration research, it has also been strongly criticized as being unidimensional and incomplete. It is fundamentally an economic model. Major cultural and political forces affecting international migration are not incorporated. As Zolberg (1981:4) has noted, large numbers of people want to leave their home country, but are completely blocked by national policies and laws restricting migrant exit and/or entry. Such restrictive laws can not be viewed as simply responding to economic forces and economic self-interest; political alliances and cultural links are often major underlying determinants of migrant entry and exit rules. Other social and political variables, such as ethnic and racial conflict and related political struggles and violence, which are evidently key determinants of major International migration flows are also neglected in Wallerstein's model.

We are now at a stage where a new generation of system models of International migration is required. The new generation models should retain the strong features of the existing World System approach, yet they must necessarily incorporate social, cultural, ideological forces which also drive international migration policies and patterns. Moreover, the non-economic forces which affect international population movements must not be viewed simply as minor disturbances to be incorporated into a largely self-sufficient economic framework. Rather, the non-economic forces should be viewed as significant in their own right and as capable of explaining major patterns in international migration.

The present paper is concerned primarily with research design and measurement issues related to new International migration system models. The methodological issues must, of course, be set in the context of conceptual challenges emerging from previous models and research. Part one of the paper briefly reviews the major challenges for second generation world systems models. Part two outlines major elements of a particular new model: the World System-Linkages model. Part three discusses research

design and operational features of the World System-Linkages approach. A final section provides findings from an illustrative study of emigration from 66 countries around the world to Canada.

Challenges

(a) There is a need to conceptualize multiple-spheres of linkage between countries. As noted, the narrow focus on productive organization in recent studies inspired by Dependency and World Systems perspectives has led to a relative lack of attention to cultural, ideological, humanitarian and other spheres of linkage which are very important for explaining certain kinds of international migration (such as refugee and sponsored kin flows). There is, for example, a general awareness in the research literature that cultural links (through common language, religion, etc.), humanitarian and ideological links (through foreign aid and refugee settlement policies, etc.) and geo-political links (through military alliances, trade pacts, etc.) between nations may each have a strong influence on international migration, and vice versa. However, we know relatively little about the influence of these non-economic linkages; the few quantitative studies carried out to date (e.g., Jasso and Rosensweig, 1986; Diaz-Briquets, 1985; Simmons and Guengant, 1987) provide strong support for various non-economic links (and, of course, for economic links as well).

(b) Major social actors, power blocs and interest groups which determine national policies with respect to immigration and emigration must be incorporated in new models. Various social actors (individuals, organizations, and state institutions) promote or resist particular kinds of international migration flows. These individuals and interest groups have been conceptualized too narrowly--often simply as employers lobbying for "cheap" labour imports in conflict with labour unions fighting such proposals--in studies which emphasize productive organization. Such an analysis, while clearly useful for major features of national policy in receiving countries, leaves out a wide range of other important political actors. Ethnic communities in receiving countries also lobby for admission of kin from their "home" country. Humanitarian coalitions, cutting across social classes, struggle to ensure that refugees are admitted. Family, community and national political leaders in sending countries may hold

values which favour or disfavour emigration, and their views may reflect primarily national, religious or ethnic sentiment.

As the preceding points indicate and other critics argue (Brenner, 1977; Skocpol, 1977) there are good general arguments for rejecting the narrowly materialistic and market-mechanism focus of the World System model as proposed by Wallerstein (1974). Following the spirit of "post-structuralist" thinking in the social sciences, we may note that all individuals and societies face both "production problems" (the generation of food, shelter, etc.) and "existential problems" (developing identity, purpose, values, sense of meaning, etc.). These two broad spheres of problems lead, of course, to interdependent solutions. The common assumption of Marxian models that cultural and ideological currents are manipulated by dominant social classes (as part of their broader effort to maintain hegemonic order) is a powerful analytic perspective, but when carried to an extreme it tends to ignore an equally important perspective: major cultural and ideological forces also operate in many respects independently of economic interests; in fact, such forces are often mobilized as resistance to "undesirable" (from the perspective of those affected) social outcomes of the productive system.

The preceding criticism of market and production-oriented systems models is particularly pertinent to analyzing international migration. If the focus on markets and productive organization were sufficient to explain migration, then one would assume that research on Third World - First World migration could be reduced entirely to analysis of economic pushes and pulls arising from the unequal distribution of income, employment and social services between the "core" and the "periphery" in an international capitalist system where investors and multi-national firms seek to maximize economic return by seeking to lower production costs (by mechanizing or using less expensive labour) while other interest groups (leaders of poor countries, labour in general) seek with less success to control such investment and re-deploy productive capacity in their favour. Yet such an approach is not sufficient; the World System approach must be modified and extended to take into account other facts and trends, such as the following:

(1) Contemporary international migration from the Third World to more developed nations is composed only in part of workers as such. A large portion of those admitted to major receiving nations such as Australia,

Canada and the USA are not workers (or investors--another desirable immigrant from the perspective of the capitalist interests in the "core" countries). Rather, the majority is composed of refugees (those favoured for political and/or humanitarian reasons) and sponsored kin (parents, siblings, children) of previous migrants. Refugees and kin are admitted for political and humanitarian reasons, not for economic reasons (even though they may bring economic benefits over the longer term). Refugee flows are a large and rising portion of all international movement, especially between Third World nations.

(2) Cultural forces can have a profound impact on international migration; moreover, these forces do not operate in any simple subordination to capitalist interests. Many "core" countries in Europe do not currently admit many immigrants, even though many employers in these countries would favour having access to "cheap" immigrant labour; Japan has a long history of resistance to receiving "foreigners." The "frontier" countries (Australia, Canada, the USA) are in contrast still open to significant immigration, including that from the Third World. These large differences in immigration policy between "core" capitalist nations can be explained by historically conditioned cultural patterns, particularly the multi-ethnic nature of the frontier countries and their openness to immigration from culturally diverse nations, as opposed to the more homogeneous "national race" found in European countries and even more so in Japan. Conversely, Third World migrants do not simply migrate to any foreign destination: migrants appear to go to places where they feel "welcome" not only because they can gain legal entry but also because the message from their ethnic kin abroad is encouraging. Last but not least, immigration policies in major receiving countries usually favour applicants with certain cultural attributes (e.g., language skills) and permit residents to sponsor kin from abroad; these policies reflect political pressure from cultural, linguistic and national groups to favour the entry of others in their "community."

Modeling World System-Linkages

The preceding observations on the need to conceptualize population movement between countries as the outcome of social action in various spheres of international linkage gives rise to a second generation world system model. This model, called the World System-Linkages framework, is

specifically tailored to understanding diverse linkages--productive, ideological, and cultural, etc.--associated (as both causes and consequences) with international migration patterns. In this model, distinct linkages are identified by the intersection of particular spheres of concern with a given category of social (or political) actor. The provisional list of spheres of concern (which may be expanded) includes: productive organization; cultural affinity; international humanitarian values and geo-political bonds. Social actors are conceptualized to include various categories, such as: family members, ethnic/religious community leaders, sectoral leaders (labour, industry, agriculture), and state officials/national political leaders.

The matrix of linkages formed by the interaction of these spheres of concern and kinds of social actors is shown in Chart 1. This is a complex, interconnected structure. Each linkage "cell" in the matrix is a locus of pressure or concern which seeks to influence action in other cells, both at home and abroad. Dynamic features of the model may be noted briefly as follows:

INSERT CHART 1 ABOUT HERE

At a micro-level, international productive linkages are of course of particular concern to family members/kin as they work out "household survival strategies", some of which involve the maintenance of "trans-national families." At a macro-level, these linkages are also of keen interest to sectoral leaders (union leaders fearing that jobs will be exported abroad; investors seeking to lower production costs) and to national leaders (concerned with the political spin off of job-loss, balance of payments, and other outcomes of the re-deployment of productive resources across countries. Local ethnic and other community leaders may also become involved, insofar as these concerns percolate through to their sphere of interest.

International cultural linkages will be of concern to various levels of actors as well. Family members are implicitly concerned with national policies in receiving countries which affect the eligibility of their kin to join them; those who have emigrated abroad are often interested in organizing cultural activities and building minority ethnic and linguistic communities in their new country which will both make them feel more "at home" and attract other relatives and kin. Ethnic community leaders in receiving countries emerge out of this process and as a result are centrally

concerned with international cultural linkages and policies affecting them. Immigrant and ethnic/religious community members and leaders put pressure on state officials to sponsor programs and pursue policies in their interest.

Humanitarian linkages also operate at all levels. Immigrant family members and community leaders in a developed nation, concerned about earthquakes or agricultural disasters at home or simply about an ill or aging relative, may seek to send help directly or may seek to sponsor the emigration of kin. Church and other institutions with international humanitarian concerns may seek to sponsor refugees directly; they will also put pressure on national leaders to develop policies to respond by developing state programs to admit and support refugees.

An important feature of this model is that it involves not only migrant preferences (motivation and views of place-utility) but also the preferences of community leaders and political actors who may favour or disfavour particular kinds of movement. Since state policies are ultimately so important in international migration systems, it may be useful to comment briefly on dynamics at this level. Senior state officials and political leaders may be viewed as "power brokers" who favour policies that benefit their major constituency while at the same time accommodating a broad enough range of interests to stay in office. With respect to immigration/emigration policy, state officials and leaders will tend to generate regulations and criteria which respond to these constraints. A common outcome in developed nations such as Australia, Canada and the USA is a policy matrix which speaks to employers within their favoured sphere (through rules on the entry of long-term and temporary workers), ethnic communities and families within their favored sphere (through rules on family sponsorship, etc.) and to humanitarian groups and geo-political interest groups within the sphere which concerns them most (through regulations governing the admission of refugees fleeing "hostile" regimes, etc.).

The multiple-linkage system is replete with "feed-back" loops in which causes and consequences of system dynamics are closely intertwined. For example, international migration at a given point in time is viewed as determined by previous system linkages, yet the migration flow will shape emerging cultural linkages, national value systems, employment and economic growth in sending and receiving countries and thereby influence future flows.

To summarize, the World System-Linkages framework assumes the operation of a complex system of international connections which may be conceptualized, for clarity and for operationalization into a research model, in terms of major dimensions of concern and various levels of social-actors. Change in the system comes about through changing productive organization in a world capitalist system, as resisted, complemented and mediated by ethnic/cultural/religious affinity and conflict; geo-political agreements; and linkages through trans-national humanitarian value systems. In this system, the "core" countries are stronger and better able to protect their economic advantage and do so, in part, by "dumping" their own economic and cultural crises on the Third World (e.g., the current debt crisis, or East-West geo-political conflict generating refugee flows in particular countries). The system creates significant pressures for Third World people to emigrate both to neighboring nations and to First World countries. The number who move and the places to which they move are determined by political action at various levels and through various spheres of international linkage.

Methodological Implications

Relatively complex research designs are required to deal with World System-Linkages models. Designs must necessarily involve information from both origin and destination countries in order to investigate systemic ties between them. The multi-dimensional character of the World System-Linkages model is particularly demanding because it requires information on various cultural, ideological, geo-political and productive ties between nations. Eventually, research designs must also address the dynamic features of the system and include information on migration flows and associated linkages at more than one point in time.

Undoubtedly one of the key reasons why quantitative assessment of complex international migration systems models has been slow is that the data requirements for empirical studies go beyond available information. This is particularly true for the dynamic historical dimension, given that quantitative data on changing international linkages and migration flows is largely restricted to a smaller number of currently developed nations. It is, however, possible to estimate a wider range of cross national linkages and flows for many Third World and "Core" nations, but only for recent years. These limitations suggest that, for the near future, research

involving Third World nations will be primarily qualitative with respect to dynamics but hopefully increasingly quantitative with respect to "static" (one time period, or cross-sectional) appraisals.

A quantitative study to assess the explanatory power of the World System-Linkages framework would have to meet a number of minimal requirements. Firstly, it would need to identify and measure a range of linkages for at least one time point. Secondly, in order to insure variation in the nature of different linkages, the research design would have to include migration between a number of countries whose economic, cultural, geo-political and humanitarian ties are diverse. Minimally, an "immigration" centred design would have to include several sending countries and at least one receiving country. (Conversely, an "emigration" centred design would have to include several receiving countries and at least one sending country.) Designs which combine multiple sending and multiple receiving countries would currently seem impractical, both because of their analytic complexity and because data requirements clearly exceed available information.

Illustrative Study: Canada and World System-Linkages

A number of previous explanatory studies of international migration flows approximate in varying degrees the methodological requirements identified in the preceding section of this paper and have found support for hypotheses consistent with the World System-Linkages model, even though they do not address the overall model (see, for example, Thomas, 1972, from a neo-classical perspective; Rosensweig and Jasso's, 1985, "push-pull" model with various linkages specified; and Simmons and Guengant, 1987, for a multi-dimensional systems perspective focusing on emigration from the Caribbean). The summary results of the Canadian case study, presented below, may be viewed as an extension and partial consolidation of conceptual and methodological tools employed at least partially in these previous studies.

Canadian immigration policy changed dramatically in 1968. Previous to that date, immigration to Canada was regulated by a national-origin priority system which gave overwhelming preference to European origin settlers (those coming directly from Europe plus those coming from the United States, Australia and other countries colonized by Europeans overseas).

The 1968 policy eliminated the implicitly racist provisions of the earlier act and replaced them with an individual points system, which rated applicants according to their age, education, occupational skills, language proficiency (ability to speak English or French), and kin ties. Country of origin, ethnicity, religion, race were explicitly deleted from the list of criteria. One may explain this policy shift in terms of shifting international values and Canada's desire to strengthen its image as a progressive leader in the community of nations.

The impact of the new policy was dramatic: whereas 80 percent or more of immigrants to Canada prior to 1968 came from Europe or from countries colonized by Europeans, by 1988, less than one-quarter of all immigrants came from these countries and more than two thirds come from Third World origins. Over this twenty year period of transition, immigrant inflows have been lower than those in peak inflow periods of the past, but nevertheless significant, at an average inflow of about 200,000 per year.

An examination of changing flows of immigrants to Canada from different countries of origin shows both patterns of gradual rise or decline (for most countries/regions) and unexpected sharp upward jumps or downward drops in the numbers arriving from a few other countries (the sharp shifts mostly involve refugee producing nations). It is also clear that the great bulk of immigrants now, as in the past, tend to arrive from a relatively small number of countries--more than half come from about 15 countries, while 80 percent come from 40 countries.

To assess the explanatory power (with respect to immigrant arrivals) of different spheres of linkage between Canada and various sending countries, a data set was assembled based on information concerning immigration and linkages with respect to 66 sending countries, including the 44 most important origin nations and 22 randomly selected other countries which send few emigrants to Canada. These data include official Canadian statistics on the number of immigrant arrivals for a particular time period (1980-82) by category of arrival (refugee, economic migrant and sponsored kin) and country of origin (specified as country of birth). They also include the following measures of linkage to the international system and control variables.

Productive/Economic sphere: Various quantitative indicators of national development/underdevelopment for each origin country around 1980

were coded. These include GNP/capital, infant mortality, adult literacy, life expectancy at birth, urbanization, and percent labour force in industry. These measures are conceptualized as crude indicators of the relative place of each country in the world system of production, wealth and power.

Cultural sphere: Several measures were developed, including:

(a) Whether English and/or French (the two "official" languages of Canada) are national languages in the origin country. (b) The "sponsorship propensity" of various national origin groups, defined as the number of sponsored kin arriving from a given country in 1980-82 as a percent of total inflows of all migrants from that country in the period 3 to 5 years earlier. (c) The size of the national origin community already resident in Canada in 1980. These diverse measures are conceptualized as indicators of cultural linkages between each sending country and Canada.

Geo-political sphere: Various indicators were contemplated, including Canadian per-capita foreign assistance grants, membership in military alliances (such as NORAD), etc. but a preliminary analysis indicated that they have no relationship to immigration flows, hence these variables are not included in the final analysis. The number of Canadian immigration officers abroad in the origin countries in contrast is included as a useful predictive indicator (although one for which the cause-effect relationship to immigration is difficult to determine).

Ideological sphere. Refugee flows are generated by economic, cultural and political conflict within the world system, but they are responded to within Canada in terms of refugee targets for specific regions and countries. These targets reflect official political ideology (favoring refugees fleeing communist regimes over those fleeing right wing dictatorships) and international religious and humanitarian values with respect to safe asylum. The ideological components arise through Canadian participation in global and regional ideological dynamics. Official Canadian views on which countries legitimately send refugees and which ones send "bogus" refugee claimants (or no refugees at all) tend to coincide broadly with UNHCR definitions of refugee producing nations, but the fit is imperfect. Hence, the empirical model employs two measures. The first measure distinguishes sending country which are "high" or "moderate" (code 1) as opposed to "low" or "none" (code 0) in terms of refugee production according to UNHCR for the period 1980-82. The second measure distinguishes countries in a region

designed as a priority for Canadian refugee admissions (code 1) from those not included in this priority list around 1980 (code 0) . These two measures are conceptualized, respectively, as indicating where refugees are in fact being produced; and which flows are favoured by Canada.

Control Variables. On the assumption that countries with larger populations and those which are closer to Canada (i.e., lower travel costs) are more likely to send larger number of immigrants, all other factors held constant, two additional variables are introduced into the empirical model: population size of the origin country and distance from the origin country to the nearest major entry port/airport in Canada.

Ordinary least-squares regression techniques are used to examine the predictive power of the various explanatory variables with respect to overall immigrant inflow from the 66 countries as well as with respect to immigrant inflow by class of entry (refugee, economic migrant, sponsored kin). Variables which accounted for very little of the variance explained were dropped from the model. The final model, summarized in Table 2, shows the following:

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

1. A relatively few linkage and control variables account for an appreciable proportion of the variance in immigrant inflows from the 66 source countries. The model accounts for 82 percent of the variance in total inflow.
2. Of the control variables, distance has no significant relationship to immigration (hence is dropped from the model), while population size in the origin country has only a relatively weak but still significant impact on inflows in the "sponsored kin" and "total" inflows.
3. Indicators of productive organization and economic development/underdevelopment are not significant and are not included in the final empirical model shown in Table 1.
4. Cultural linkage factors are significant, explaining a large portion of the variance in the inflows of economic migrants and sponsored kin. Cultural linkages are not related to refugee inflows.
5. Refugee inflows are accounted for least well in the predictive model ($R^2 = .71$). As expected, refugee inflow is not related to economic and ethnic community linkage, but is related to refugee production and Canadian refugee priorities.

6. The model predicts immigrant inflows from the more important source countries far better than it does for those countries which send relatively few immigrants. Chart 2 shows actual versus predicted inflow data for more important sending countries. Obviously some countries fit the empirical model far better than others; some countries fit very poorly.

INSERT CHART 2 ABOUT HERE

The preceding findings, expressed in summary form, do not address the political process within Canada affecting the regulations which govern inflow in various categories. This is a topic which goes beyond the present paper, yet a few brief comments may be made. Perhaps the key observation is that economic migrants (namely those who are admitted because they have desired labour force skills or business capital) have been for several years a minority in the total inflow to Canada. In contrast, refugees currently account for about one-fifth of the inflow, while sponsored kin account for approximately half of the inflow. Moreover, while the number of economic migrants admitted varies widely from year to year (in accord with trends/fears of unemployment, etc.), the number of refugees and sponsored kin remains more constant. These proportions reflect the application of regulations by state officials and political leaders in response to the diverse and contradictory pressures from humanitarian, cultural-linguistic, employer and union organizations.

The results generally support the view that productive linkages in the world system may be important for generating pressures for emigration and openness to immigration, but that policies in receiving countries such as Canada are currently less tuned to these external pressures and more responsive to humanitarian and cultural linkages and pressures arising from them at home. This is quite a departure from what one would expect from systems approaches limited to arguments on productive organization as the driving force for change to the exclusion of other dimensions of linkage and determination.

Conclusions

The findings from the case study may be unique to the Canadian setting in recent years. It is interesting to note that a multi-dimensional linkage study carried out on emigration from the Caribbean pointed to economic/productive organization as the major explanation for which islands

lost more population, even though cultural linkages to major receiving countries were also important (see Simmons and Guengant, 1987). Findings from these two studies seem contradictory but may be quite compatible: linkage factors that explain intercountry variation in emigration (to all destinations) may be closely related to economic "push" arising from development crisis and inequality in the world system, whereas linkage factors which explain immigration to Canada (from all origins) may be more closely related to cultural and ideological "pull" arising from other dimensions of the world system.

The multi-dimensional World System-Linkages model of international migration proposed in this paper builds on the shoulders of various other theoretical initiatives. This new approach suggests a range of needed studies and is open to diverse methodologies. Among the promising research designs is the use of multivariate, quantitative models involving various sending countries and their linkages and migration flows to a given receiving nation at a given point in time. As the analysis of flows from 66 countries around the world to Canada shows, the approach can lead to rather high levels of "explanation" and a number of non-obvious findings, despite the fact that the indicators for linkage used in this particular study were generally crude proxies for the concepts in the model.

Future research priorities emerging from this exercise include the need to examine other countries and migration sub-systems. When possible, these explorations should assess patterns cross-sectionally (later dynamically) at more than one point in time. They should also seek to incorporate new variables to improve prediction for all countries and pay attention to countries which do not fit the empirical models.

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Chart 1. System linkages by sphere and category of social actor.

Social Actors:	Spheres of Linkage			
	Productive	Cultural	Geo-polit	Ideological
Family/kin, friends, etc.				
Community and sectorial leaders (labour, industry, ethnic and humanit- arian groups...)				
State officials and leaders				

Table 1. Regression Results: Select Independent Variables on Immigrant Landings (1980-82) by Country of Origin

Independent Variables	Immigrant Landings by Arrival Class			
	Independent	Refugee	Family	All
PARAMETER ESTIMATES				
Intercept	-892.489	-132.729	-2707.514	-3732.733
Population of origin country (in 000's)	-1.94	-0.737	21.062**	18.384**
Language of origin country	1853.265**	-64.951	2273.131**	4061.445**
Social-political turmoil in origin country	-866.51	-1299.048**	-452.989	-2618.585*
Country of origin included in Canadian refugee priorities	-1813.878	19094.778**	-1923.449	15357.45**
Size of ethnic community in Canada (in 000's)	0.037**	0.003	0.012**	0.053**
Sponsorship quotient of ethnic group in Canada	4237.95	7361.178	12051.182**	23650.316**
VARIANCE ACCOUNTED FOR				
R sq.	0.858	0.66	0.738	0.837
Adjusted R sq.	0.844	0.624	0.71	0.82

SIGNIFICANCE

** Significant at $p < .01$.

* Significant at $p < .05$.