

Global and Swedish Migration

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To build solid platforms for respect and equity in society in the classroom, it is important for teachers to understand migration and the context of individuals who have migrated. Even the best-intentioned teachers may fall into the trap of perpetuating structural or social racism if they are not conscious and do not seek to actively address their own biases and attempt to identify how those biases can affect their teaching practices and decision-making in the classroom.

This chapter offers basic information and understanding of the interdisciplinary field of migration and, specifically migration to Sweden. The **key aim** of this chapter is to enable teachers to appreciate how migration is embedded in a range of broader social, political, cultural and economic issues.

What is the definition of migration?

The SAOB dictionary defines migration as: **movement of people from one place to another**. Yet policy makers and the media present agendas that add to this simple meaning. For this reason, it should not surprise us that the concept of migration and what it implies is broadly debated in Sweden and beyond. Why? Because these agendas lead us to assume – not *know* – a lot about the people that move.

Let us consider the quote below:

Creating new names and assessments and apparent truths is enough to create new “things” — Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (2001).

For example we cannot speak about migration without words as “population”, “rights”, “market”, or “legality” which are actually about society at large. Yet our ancestors moved around for millennia without these concepts as we use them today. Words shape our thoughts and ultimately can create “things” as Nietzsche puts it. An interesting fact is that the word migration did not even exist in the English vocabulary until the 17th century (Online Etymology Dictionary 2017).

What is the dominant political discourse on migration today?

Migration is usually framed as a *problem* that needs to be *fixed* with appropriate policies. These policies are usually designed along two lines (Castles 2010:1567–1568):

- 1- A more repressive variant, such as tighter border controls to prevent migration altogether.

And:

- 2- A more liberal variant, addressing “root causes” of migration (usually defined as poverty and violence).

Either way, migration is framed as something harmful and dysfunctional – something that must be stopped. Let us now backtrack and consider global migration historically.

Global migration history

Migration has *always* been a part of human history. People have always moved, whether to search for new opportunities or to escape poverty, environmental degradation and/or conflict (Castles et al. 2014: 5). Historically, it is through migration that:

- The world became populated.
- Europeans began their colonization projects.
- Administrators, traders and military personnel came to be the first forms of professional mobility in modern terms.
- We can trace many forms of inequality back to when slaves and indentured labourers were transported across and within continents.

There is much we can consider when it comes to global migration history. It is therefore useful to delimit our exploration in time and consider how the migration phenomenon came to be as we see it today. Bearing this in mind it is useful to connect migration's global history to the following concepts:

- Globalization
- Acceleration
- Causes, processes and patterns
- State categories and diversification

Globalization

There is a persisting belief that migration did not become globalized until the 20th century. To explore this concept, however, let us first define what is globalization.

Why globalization?

The term "globalization" has been used in many diverse contexts since the 1990s (Hylland-Eriksen 2003). One of the most common ways refers to the faster, more sophisticated interaction and exchange between places and peoples who were, until very recently, geographically, economically and culturally separate. This gives us a rather caricatured view of human populations as dramatically hermetic until the end of the 20th century. Yet ethnographic materials and archaeological goods remind us that societies have, in fact, been in contact with each other for a long time.

There are key historic moments when scholars attempt to define migration as globalized. For example, Castles et al. (2014) point out that migration took on a new character in the 16th century with the first waves of European colonialism. By the 19th to mid-20th centuries, we arrive at what they consider the first age of "mass migration".

"First" age of mass migration (19th to mid-20th century)

Before 1925, 85% of international migrants were from Europe, accounting for up to 58 million people. Yet we must also consider that focusing primarily on transatlantic migration affects our ideas of the world. For example there is little research on migration from and within Africa or East Asia. So, if migration has always been global, **why is there more attention on the globalization of migration today?** The reasons for this increased attention include:

- Increased diversity from different regions of the world
- Increased migration from the global South to the global North (Castles et al. 2014)

A key challenge to globalization

One of the biggest challenges to the globalization of migration is the birth of the nation-state. Even if migration controls have existed in other forms historically it is since the modern nation-state arose that the administration of movement has been a key aspect of *state sovereignty*. State sovereignty gives the state the authority to control who enters its territory. Practically and symbolically, borders have come to demarcate who can and cannot enter, who is a citizen and who is a non-citizen. It is the very definition of the *non-citizen* that helps define who the citizen is (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). We will consider this point further in the section on state categories.

State policies on migration have become increasingly restrictive over time as they seek to manage, control and regulate the phenomenon (Duvell 2011). This is a key characteristic of the modern era of migration and an important challenge posed to the globalization of migration.

Acceleration

“Migration is the exception not the rule” – Castles et al. 2014

Despite ongoing media images of flows of immigrants invading the global North, international migrants only constitute 3% of the world’s population (Castles et al. 2014), though their impact is much greater than this figure suggests. Migration affects not only migrants but also sending and receiving societies. It is difficult today to find people who do not have personal experience of migration in one way or the other.

Migration is growing in all regions of the world. Such an acceleration has been noticed before; for example, during the 19th and mid-20th centuries, millions of Europeans fled poverty and hunger.

- At first glance 19 million overseas emigrants from China or 29 million from India at the time seems like a drop in the bucket compared to the 55 million from much smaller countries like Italy, Norway, Ireland, and England at the time.
- Some of the highest emigration rates ever recorded were an annual average of 22 emigrants per 1,000 people from Ireland during the Potato Famine (1845–1855), or 18 per 1,000 from Iceland in the 1880s when nearly a fifth of the country’s population set out for the United States.
- More typical rates in periods of high overseas emigration are 10.8 per 1,000 from Italy, 8.3 per 1,000 from Norway, and 7 per 1,000 from Ireland in the first decade of the 20th century (McKeown 2004).
- Up to 1.3 million Swedes emigrated due to catastrophic famines in the 19th and early 20th centuries, peaking in the year 1887 (McKeown 2004).

What is different today?

- Between 1990 and 2010, migration has increased significantly to Europe, North America and industrialised regions of Asia. The highest immigration rates are to Oceania (New Zealand and Australia).

- The displacement of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons was recently at its highest in decades but started slowing down in 2016. Still the Global Trends Study reported 65.7 million were forcibly displaced in 2016 (UNHCR 2017).
- We must also consider that the second-ranked birthplace, for a quarter of the 244 million international migrants in 2015 was Europe (United Nations 2015).

Why is there more attention on accelerated global migration today?

- 1- There has been a notable increase in human migration to **different regions** of the world and
- 2- There is an acceleration of migration from the global South to the global North.

Note for consideration: Are migration flows seen as problematic because of where migrants come from or because of perceptions and management in the places where they are received?

We must note that the dominant political discourse on migration as a *problem to be solved* has been led by receiving states in the global North (de Haas 2005). Scholars have attempted to explain the causes, processes and patterns of migration but this research has largely focused on issues faced in receiving states (de Haas 2005). Therefore we must consider migration research itself has had a “Northern bias”.

Causes, processes and patterns

How we define and understand migration has shifted through history. A very important approach through which scholars attempt to understand global migration today is through tracking its causes, processes and patterns (Massey 2005, Castles et al 2014, Brettel and Hollified 2015 among others). ***Still there is little evidence and no theory that can explain with certainty why people move.*** For the moment I will mention the two most prominent assumptions of why people move:

- 1- Technology
- 2- Socio-economic transformation

Important Note: This focus on causes, processes and patterns does not consider the definition of forced migration as triggered by war, revolution, political persecution and natural disasters. Yet distinguishing between forced and voluntary migration is challenging, and certainly both technology and socio-economic transformation play a role, even if not a definitive one, in all forms of migration.

Attention! These assumptions do not adequately consider the state’s role in producing categories that are designed to demarcate, control and manage migration. We will consider the role of the state later in this chapter.

Technology

Since the late 19th century transportation technology has advanced significantly. For example, steamships and railways facilitated the growth of migration in the 19th to 20th centuries. The development of technology is rarely considered when seeking to explicate global migration.

Socio-economic transformations

Socio-economic transformations, such as those caused by poverty, hunger and economic crises, are less definitive than technology yet are commonly used to explain migration.

It is claimed that one important cause of emigration in the age of mass migration during the 19th century was hunger. Millions of Europeans died of hunger while others emigrated to the US, Canada, Chile, Argentina and Australia. People from Ireland, certain parts of Spain and the south of Italy, came to populate much of the American continent (see figures above, McKeown 2004).

In the 21st century we are said to be living in a migration crisis (Zolberg 2001), one that has been linked to economic crisis. For example the 2008 economic crisis could be seen as similar to the famines of the 19th century that Europeans sought to escape. Many migrant Europeans were dependent on agriculture in the 19th century, whilst many migrants from the global South from the second half of the 20th century are dependent on a salary and vulnerable to economic crisis.

Even less considered is the distinct role of migrant-colonizers in the past and migrants today. The former were long depicted as bringing civilization, yet death, disease and economic exploitation characterized their move to the “New” World. Today’s migrants are represented as a problem and/or threat.

Notes for consideration:

- Merely considering socio-economic transformations does not suffice in understanding migration patterns, causes and processes. There are other factors in the decision-making process of migrants that can be taken into account, such as household decision-making, individual decision-making, family reunification and the like. We also must consider the role of the state.
- Migrants have been increasingly framed as a threat to national security (Huysman 2001). Migrants have also been used as scapegoats to justify unemployment rates and pitfalls in the welfare system.
- The dominant discourse in receiving states of the global North presents migration as a problem to be solved (de Haas 2005). We must consider how our understanding of migration has been influenced by how states in the global North represent, manage and control migration.
- Economists have constantly produced data supporting migration as a benefit, not a cost to national economies (OECD 2014).
- There is no evidence that supports that migration produces a state of emergency (Bigo 2002).

Box 1: Migration, Security and Human Rights*Security*

Key events as 9/11 have supported the framing of international migration as an issue of national security and point towards problems inherent in international migrants living together in one society.

Key issue: Actually the movement of people continues to be connected to economic, social and political transformation, *not* to terrorism or crime (Huysman 2000). There is *no* evidence that international migration produces a state of emergency (Bigo 2002).

On the other hand the strengthening of migration and border controls has had fatal effects.

Human rights and humanitarianism

Intersecting the securitization of migration is the human rights debate concerning undocumented migrants. As the production of illegality is on the rise, precarious and vulnerable conditions of travel are also increasing and the need to refer to human rights become obvious.

“International migration is a constant, not an aberration, in human history” (Castles et al. 2014: 317). Movement of people has always happened when there has been demographic growth, socio-economic transformations, changes in technology, political conflict and warfare. Yet the most lasting effects of migration seem to be its effect on politics. This leads us to consider the role of the state.

State categories and diversification

The way we frame migration today has diversified immensely and depends heavily on how immigrants are treated by receiving states. More broadly this can be understood by considering the legal categories produced by the state and, specifically, the increased production of “illegality” (De Genova 2004). This means that the state, through sovereign power, has acquired authority to control who enters its territory. Thus while “illegal” migration is on the rise, we should consider that it is actually the state that produces and identifies most migration flows as “illegal”. We therefore must consider whether states should have the authority to make human movement “illegal”.

We must also consider that, historically, concerns with migration have had a lot to do with concerns about movement of the poor. From vagrancy to undocumented migrants today. Anderson (2013) shows that this concern can be found at least as early as the 14th century and remains significant today.

Legal categories

States differentiate between types of migrants with the purpose of administrating and controlling movement. Indeed, the politics of migration greatly depends on how governments identify and treat immigrants. State categories used to identify non-citizens include: refugees,

permanent and temporary migrants, and illegal migrants among others. This categorisation relates to the granting or not of various rights. In practice we can also consider the role of the use of passports (Torpey 2000) and visa regulations in identity immigration politics.

Class

The link to classes amongst migrants becomes clearer when we take two issues into account:

- 1- Highly skilled workers are usually more easily capable of getting visas and residence permits, whilst refugees and manual workers very often experience exclusions and discrimination.
- 2- The absence of access to legal channels increases the vulnerability of migrants and leads to precarious conditions when travelling. Paradoxically it is the state which produces this precarious status as migrants become “illegal” and thus vulnerable to human rights abuses whilst simultaneously being the only space were migrants are forced to denounce and claim their human rights.

But being low-skilled and/or poor is not the only marker impacting immigration politics. Below we will consider the role of ethnicity and race.

Ethnicity and race

Increasingly, receiving countries have seen the arrival of different traditions, religions and political institutions. These differences can be expressed through language, how people dress, which traditions they practice and the like.

To consider:

The definition of a non-citizen/migrant in society might have a lot more to do with concepts of difference around ethnicity or race, not just state categories. This has much to do with the social meaning given to ethnicity and race by the receiving population and states (Castles et al. 2014: 18)

For example, international migrants such as the British in Australia or Austrians in Germany are said to be indistinguishable from the receiving population. Western Europeans are claimed to easily assimilate in North America. The same is rarely claimed for migrants from the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Asia in Europe, which actually are key actors in the development of the integration debate. We will explore this in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Can diversity and transnationalism be seen as beneficial in countering the violence and destructiveness that characterized the era of nationalism (Castles et al. 2014)?

Box 2: Feminization of Migration

The feminization of migration has been significantly less visible historically. Instead labour migrations have been mainly framed as male-dominated with women only addressed through policies under the category of family reunion. By 1850, however, migration within international waged labour, embedded in globalization and capitalism processes, accounted for the increased movement of women as partners for sexual and/or domestic service. This took place independently or through organized networks. The increase in international migration of women for work and in search of new opportunities was received with great suspicion by the middle class and linked with white slavery (i.e. the sexual exploitation of white women) at the time (Kempadoo 2005; x) (Doezema 2000; 27).

Today, female movement within low-skilled labour and the sex sector is problematized and victimized and often linked to human trafficking. The redefinition of trafficking is no longer exclusive to sex work and recognises other sites of exploitation (Gallagher 2006; 142). Despite this, it is argued that sex trafficking takes the spotlight of most debates (Anderson 2007), and it is still the target of most interventions on the ground.

Between 1960 and 2000 migrant women around the world increased twofold from 35 million to 85 million. By 2000, women constituted 48.6% of the world's migrants, nearly half the migrant population. Yet there is limited attention to the gendered dimension of migration (Oishi 2005).

Migration in Sweden*Emigration*

During the mid-19th century Sweden was struck by crop failures and famines (Harvard University Library Open Collections). At this time 90% of the population relied on agriculture (Swedish Institute). As discussed earlier, historians estimate that up to 1.3 million Swedes emigrated during the 19th to mid-20th centuries (McKeown). The Swedish Institute estimates that 1.5 million Swedes emigrated.

The socio-economic transformations that triggered Swedish emigration a century ago are not that distinct from those leading to migration from the global South. One group was dependent on agriculture, the other is dependent on a salary. Yet, historically Swedes were considered *colonists* rather than *immigrants*. While the triggers for migration are the same, what has changed is how migration is represented, managed and controlled by receiving countries.

In Vilhelm Moberg's renowned novel *The Emigrants* he attempts to grasp why rural Swedes packed their bags, risked their lives and undertook a perilous and long journey, with characters and experiences that form part of the debate today: prostitutes, children dying from hunger, the relief of arrival after a risky journey filled with risks, disease and death.

Even today, Swedes continue to emigrate though not to the same extent and no longer under precarious conditions. Today, Swedes enjoy access to safe travel and have one of the most desirable passports, with the second-fewest visa restrictions in the world (The Economist

2017).

For example, 2011 marked the largest exodus from Sweden in history with over 50,000 people leaving the country in a single year. Although we must also consider the importance of seeing these figures in relation to the larger population. There was an 80% growth of Swedish emigrants to China compared to 2010. Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån—SCB) suggests this growing number of emigrants is due to the population's "increased ability to move".

A reason why emigration from Sweden is no longer a concern might be the shift in power of the state from population to territory (Foucault). However, it might also have to do with the legitimization of freedom of movement for some, but not all, in the world.

Immigration

As with many other European countries, post-war immigration to Sweden can be divided into three distinct phases.

The *first phase* relates to World War 2 itself and the resultant refugee migration (Jews from concentration camps, Finnish children, Danish and Norwegian refugees) and to the political developments occurring in some of Sweden's neighbouring countries (Estonia, Latvia).

The *second phase*, during the 1950s and 1960s, is characterised by substantial labour immigration (primarily from Italy, Finland, Greece, and Yugoslavia).

The *third phase*, commencing in the early 1970s and continuing through the rest of the century and into the present, is again characterized by refugee and family reunion immigration. This time, however, there is a rather large influx of non-European immigrants, especially from Western Asia (Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Iran), Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia) and Latin America (Chile). (Andersson 2007)

The *fourth phase* is now emerging. We can demarcate its starting point in 2014 when the current refugee crisis took hold. The year 2015 marked a new record, with 163,000 asylum applications received in Sweden, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan (Migrationsverket 2017).

Conclusion

How way we create apparent truths enables the creation of new things. In the dominant political discourse, global migration is recurrently constructed as a problem to be solved, and as a recent phenomenon. Yet, as we have seen, migration has always existed; what is different today is how this human mobility is represented, governed and controlled. How this difference emerged historically is partly due to the diversification of migration in terms of ethnicity and race, but more importantly, due to increased migration from the global South to the North. This has led to problematizing the globalization of migration, and assertions of an acceleration in migration that does not exist. The reaffirmation of borders and state sovereignty by nation-states, especially in the global North, has presented a challenge to global migration. We have also considered how technology and socio-economic transformations can be used to understand mass migration flows and how these show similarities emerging across time: from poverty and hunger as triggers for emigration in the 19th to mid-20th century in Europe, to

poverty in the global South today. Finally, we considered the role of the state in the production of state categories, especially in producing the “illegality” of the movement of the poor.

References to mobility has shifted from sailors and merchants to labour and “illegal” migrants, from colonisers to minorities, and so on. Today, Sweden is facing new challenges posed by a new migration paradigm. Integration is high on political agendas. Chapter 2 provides a general overview of integration in Sweden and how schools and teachers can contribute to integration through promoting equity, respect and dignity for all inhabitants of Swedish society.

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