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The political sociology of international migration:

Borders, boundaries, rights and politics

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Abstract

Politics is an underdeveloped topic in migration studies, a lacuna that derives from prevailing intellectual biases, whether having to do with those that focus on individual action or those that emphasize social processes. This paper identifies the central issues entailed in the study of migrant politics, whether having to do with receiving society *immigrant* politics or sending society *emigrant* politics, reviewing and assessing the ways in which scholars have tackled this problem.

International migration is an inherently political phenomenon. In leaving home, the migrants vote with their feet, *against* the home state and *for* the receiving state, preferring a state with the resources needed to provide public goods and make markets work over one that can't. In so doing, the migrants also do what *neither* state wants: their departures/entries illuminate problems of state capacity on both sides of the chain, highlighting the home state's inability to retain its people while underscoring the receiving state's inability to control its borders to the extent that the populace wants. Once across the border, migrants simultaneously become foreigners *in* the country *where they live* while becoming foreign *to* the country *from which they came*. Consequently, international migration always raises the question of the migrants' attachment to body politics newly encountered as well as left behind.

Unfortunately, there is no carefully specified perspective for understanding how these twin attachments are made, transformed, or cut off. Despite growing interest, politics remains an underdeveloped topic in migration studies, whether the concern has to do with receiving society *immigrant* politics or sending society *emigrant* politics. As we will show in the next section, this lacuna derives from prevailing intellectual biases, whether having to do with those that focus on individual action or those that emphasize social processes. We will then identify central issues entailed in the study of migrant politics – whether home or host country oriented – reviewing and assessing the ways in which scholars have tackled this problem.

Why politics falls out

Assimilation. Assimilation remains the most influential approach to the study of the migrant experience on the receiving society side of the border. Yet politics is nowhere to be found in any of the influential statements of this perspective. Case in point is Alba and Nee's seminal, *Remaking the Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (2003: 235), where politics receives barely any mention. The longest treatment is a paragraph long, emphasizing that the European immigrants of

the 19th and early 20th centuries “inserted themselves qua groups into political processes...in ways that created tangible rewards for ethnic membership...”(156). As for citizenship, a matter of great political controversy *and* substantial scholarship, it gets no reference at all.

How could it be otherwise? The strength of Alba and Nee’s account lies in its rational choice approach: immigrants cast off ethnic ways and attachments, connecting with the mainstream and adopting its practices, because orientations toward the host country and its expectations yield the greatest rewards. Hence, the immigrant search to get ahead gradually but inexorably leads to the decline of an ethnic difference.

Since “conflict and disagreement” – *not* the disappearance of difference – are the “defining features of political life” (Pearson and Citrin, 2006: 220), a theory of political assimilation cannot simply forecast diffusion into some undifferentiated mainstream: no such thing exists. Politically, the population that Alba and Nee describe as the mainstream is divided, whether by ideology, class, region, religion, or some material interest. Bereft of sociological meaning, the mainstream is instead a claim, an ideological tool that insiders and outsiders use to struggle over who is what. Moreover, assimilation into the mainstream and a corresponding diffusion of identity is *not* what receiving society publics want. Rather, they clamor that the foreigners become nationals, replacing the particularism imported from abroad with the particularism found in their new home. Last, whereas the framework advanced by Alba and Nee understands boundaries to be informal, the relevant political boundaries involve the inherently formal conditions of legal status and citizenship. Those bright political boundaries exercise long-term consequences at both individual and societal levels: initial non-incorporation impedes political participation at any point in the process, whether before or after citizenship acquisition (Hochschild and Mollenkopf, 2009). As long as the migrants remain outside the body politic, they have limited ability to influence “who gets what” let alone “who is what,” a factor in turn structuring the society in which they now live.

Transnationalism. Transnationalism is the popular intellectual alternative to assimilation and deservedly so, as it demonstrates how international migration inherently generates cross-border connections, which then gradually yield a “transnational social field” linking migrants and stay-at-homes.

In highlighting these cross-border connections and their ubiquity, interest in transnationalism has broadened the scope of inquiry, moving it beyond the traditional preoccupations with immigrant assimilation or integration in which everything of importance transpires *within* the boundaries of destination states. Though enlightening, this new sensitivity yields little more than a richer, broader description, as it lacks a framework to explain how migrants manage these cross-state conditions, under which conditions, with what success, and for how long.

Ironically, the intellectual difficulties resemble the shortcomings afflicting assimilation approaches. Just like assimilation, transnationalism highlights the migrants’ agency, with the difference that the story gets pulled back to the point of origin. Rather than starting on the receiving side of the border, the proponents of transnationalism note that the motivations impelling migration – the search for a better life – make migration a survival strategy for kin and significant others left at home. While these cross-state ties are ubiquitous, they are put in place by masses of individuals taking a common, parallel, but *uncoordinated* path in the effort to get ahead. Though the migrants are therefore likely to be highly connected, it is not clear how or why they should identify with any home country political collectivity, whether at local, regional, or national levels.

Just like assimilation, transnationalism also neglects the structures impeding engagement with the body politic left behind, as upon movement to a new state migrants suffer the dual exclusion associated with their status as emigrants – being citizens abroad – and as immigrants – being aliens where they actually live. While home states can and do follow “their” emigrants abroad, they are not “unbound”, but rather constrained by the costs and logistics of creating a political

infrastructure in a foreign country, not to speak of concerns that visible home country activity might spark anti-immigrant reactions. Unfortunately, the transnational perspective has not acknowledged these obstacles, nor explained how they might be transcended. Just as seriously it lacks an account of the factors that might promote the persistence of homeland attachments, notwithstanding the many changes that so often lead migrants to shift focus to the country of reception as settlement deepens.

Migrants' Perspectives: From Migration to Mobilization

Where might we look for insight into the processes by which international migrants, impelled into cross-border mobility by their own private concerns, follow a path to political engagement? One source is Piore's classic *Birds of Passage* (1979). Here, Piore emphasizes settlement: initially oriented towards return, seeking to help their families by sojourning in a rich country, the migrants live together, with little sense of connection, either to one another or to the new country where they live. They take as many jobs as they can find, seeking to quickly accumulate the savings needed to go home and invest in a farm or a new business. But the strategy that works in the short term becomes increasingly problematic as time wears on: as the migrants spend more time with one another and more money on their own consumption, leaving less to be sent home abroad, their time horizon expands.

A time in the receiving society deepens, orientations shift, as migrants' expectations regarding the terms and conditions of work converge with those of the society around them. Once content to fill the unstable, undesirable jobs at the bottom of the hierarchy, content with lowest quality dwellings, they increasingly want more. Since from here it is a short step to some collective action, whether wildcat or more organized strikes or concerted activity of some other sort, the model developed by Piore tells us how the transition from migrant laborer to political subject might occur. Though highly stylized, this model receives ample support from research conducted across a

broad range of contexts, whether focusing on protests among foreign workers in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s or among Latino immigrants in the United States.

While accurately depicting the changing mentality and comportment of the classic migrant laborer, as an account of political behavior, Piore's model falls short on at least two counts. Following the prevailing trend in the literature, it pushes emigrant politics off the agenda: once the migrants' frame of reference shifts from "there" to "here", receiving society issues are all that matters. More importantly it takes for granted that the possibility that the receiving society permits such a shift. After all, the underlying psychological and social mechanisms should be the same among Pakistani migrants to the Persian Gulf or Filipino migrant workers to Singapore, as among Mexicans in Los Angeles or Algerians in Paris. Yet the latter two possess something lacked by the former two: namely, a set of formal rights: at the minimum, to freedom of expression and assembly and to judicial relief, regardless of legal or citizenship status, often to more expanded social rights, including labor protection by the sending state and its agencies and involvement in organized labor. The question, therefore, has to do with the origins of these rights and the factors embedding them in the political environment that the migrants confront in the society where they settle. To pursue that issue, we need to shift perspective and examine the contours of migrant political behavior from the standpoint of the host societies and states that they encounter. Later, we will return to questions of emigrant politics.

The receiving context: Closure and incorporation

Political incorporation and citizenship

We begin with citizenship, a multidimensional concept touching on issues of rights, legal status, participation in the polity, membership and belonging. Zeroing in on several of these dimensions, we can see how the contradictions and tensions among them create the environment in which migrants are both politicized *and* become political actors themselves.

The bounded polity:

Citizenship has two faces: it is internally inclusive, establishing legal equality for members of the state, but also externally exclusive, as only citizens possess unconditional access to the territory and full political rights. Using the term introduced by Rogers Brubaker (1992), citizenship is an object as well an instrument of closure.

This dimension of citizenship is key in maintaining the coherence between the identity of the population in the state and that of the people of the state. While the view that society=nation=state represents the liberal ideal, an “imagined community” (Anderson 2006) in which the polity takes the form of the rule of likes over likes, international migrations challenge this isomorphism of states, societies and people. Maintaining that national, imagined community *demand*s that the people be bounded, lest there be no members with interests reflected in and represented by *their* state. Because the community of citizens needs the stability and commitment that comes with membership, the internal boundary of citizenship necessarily confronts foreigners wanting political membership in the territory where they actually live; passage across that internal frontier is *never* guaranteed. Believing in the idea of the national community, nationals endeavor to implement it, making sure that membership is only available to some, and signaling to the newcomers that acceptance is contingent on conformity. Hence, rather than an atavism slated to disappear, anti-immigrant sentiment is the dark side of the commitment to a national community.

Territory and rights:

While the boundaries of the polity are tightly guarded, the boundaries of its territory are much more permeable, as almost all allow the influx of aliens, whether immigrants (both legal and undocumented), visitors, foreign students or temporary workers. While potential migrants have no claims on the state they hope to enter as long as they are on the “wrong” side of the border they wish to cross, the situation takes on very different form, as soon as that border is successfully

traversed. While lacking the full entitlements of citizens, or the less complete protections of legal resident aliens, contemporary migrants *all* “have a right to have rights,” the basic fundament of citizenship as famously described by Arendt (1951). Today even the undesirables are no longer cast of out of humanity, as in the mid-20th century world she depicted. It is precisely because they are so enabled, that contemporary migrants have the capacity to strike and protest when their aspirations change in the way that Piore suggests.

From where do those rights come? Some analysts hail the advent of “post-national citizenship,” claiming that foreign residents share the same core rights enjoyed by citizens, thanks to the protection of an international human rights discourse/regime and the advent of an of post-national membership where personhood complements and partly replaces nationality (Soysal 1994). These scholars, however, concede that any “post-national citizenship” extends to legal residents only, leaving unauthorized migrants at the mercy of the host state; they also note that international conventions or discourses yield strongest impacts *within* state boundaries, but not at the *external* boundary, where states exercise greater latitude.

An alternative view contends that migrants’ rights derive from the fundamental traits of the polities into which they move. The receiving societies of North America, Europe, and the Antipodes are more than nation states guarding borders and access to membership: they are liberal democracies whose constitutions and legal orders demand an expansive distribution of rights (Joppke 1998). Indeed, the history of the U.S. – the case in which immigration is most deeply rooted in the country’s tradition – underscores the degree to which migrants’ rights derive from the nature of the polity itself. U.S. courts recognized aliens' legal personhood and rights to protection in the late 19th century by U.S. courts, decisions that subsequently provided the basis for additional rights (Bosniak, 2006) . Furthermore, the nature of liberal polities is such that migrants will enjoy the

support of fully established allies, equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to defend migrant rights they see as embedded in existing statutes and also fight for expanded migrant rights.

Though contemporary migrants to democratic states enjoy a baseline of rights, it is unstable and uncertain, capable of expanding, but also contracting. Toleration was long the *de facto* policy in the rich, receiving state democracies; since the 1990s, greater efforts at border control have increasingly been linked to intensified efforts at internal control, leaving unauthorized migrants with a narrower margin of rights and an increased risk of deportation. Legal residents are better protected; however, even their rights can be rolled back, as indicated by trends in the United States since the mid-1990s.

Moreover, migrants' capacity for political participation falls far short of that enjoyed by citizens. Most importantly, voting rights are more limited; nowhere have non-citizens gained the right to vote in national elections. Consequently, exclusion from citizenship inevitably produces a divide between democracy and demography, a gap particularly large in the United States, where only one third of the foreign born population possesses US citizenship and another third lacks legal resident status (Passell and Cohn, 2009). In the United States, therefore, the question of "who is what" has had a steadily widening impact on "who gets what." Non-citizens are poorer than citizens, a gap that has substantially widened over the past four decades. Moreover, the poorest of the non-citizens are those most firmly excluded from the polity: two thirds of the immigrants with less than a high school education are in the United States illegally. But these are also the people whom the citizens entitled to influence policy and most likely to engage with politics are *least* inclined to help. Whereas the median voter has always been more selective – better educated, more affluent – than the median citizen, that discrepancy has remained relatively unchanged; by contrast, the gap between the median voter and the median non-citizen (legal or otherwise) has grown, as the latter has fallen increasingly behind the former. Consequently, redistribution has become

increasingly unattractive to the median voter, who would have to share with non-citizens; because the burden of America's growing inequality has disproportionately been born by non-citizens, the motivations to cut up the pie in a more equitable way have correspondingly declined (McCarty et al. 2006).

Crossing the divide: Becoming a citizen

Thus, although some scholars have described a “devaluation of citizenship,” there is every reason to think that citizenship as status, and not just citizenship as rights, remains crucial. Hence, a crucial issue remains the ways in which persons who have crossed over the *external*, territorial boundary can later move across the *internal*, boundary of citizenship. This brings us to the questions of the rules of citizenship acquisition and the modalities by which citizenship is also an object of closure. As mentioned above all nation-states make naturalization – the acquisition of the country's citizenship to those who haven't been assigned at birth contingent on a set of requirements. For example a significant period of *legal* presence in the territory is a minimum requirement in most states. But beyond that substantial differences remain.

These differences are often linked to typologies of citizenship regimes, with the classic distinction contrasting ethnic and civic definitions of citizenship. In the former the barriers for access to the political community for migrants and their children are very high while in the latter the barriers are much lower. The analytical value and utility of this distinction however is open to question – especially when it attempts to sort whole countries into these boxes. But even particular policies that govern the acquisition of citizenship are often hard to categorize. Thus, a host country might insist on fluency in its language as a precondition for naturalization or even for admission to the territory as a long-term resident. But is that a sign of civic conception because it emphasizes the importance of communication in the common public sphere or is it rather an element of an ethnically defined boundary around the citizenry? Moreover, within any particular stylized

citizenship variant, policies toward citizenship differ, as shown by Bloemraad (2006), comparing two countries falling into the “civic” citizenship category, the U.S. and Canada. The U.S. takes a *laissez-faire* approach towards citizenship acquisition: while legal immigrants face relatively few impediments in accessing citizenship, they have to do it on their own, with little direct or indirect encouragement from the state. In Canada, by contrast, the state actively encourages the newcomers to become Canadians. The consequences can be seen in contrasting rates of naturalization: the foreigners arriving in Canada become citizens at roughly twice the rate of their counterparts who instead head for the United States.

Brubaker defines the state as a “membership organization, an association of citizens” (1992: 21). But just as citizenship can take more than one form, involving status as well as rights, so membership has more than one dimension. While membership can be equated with status, as in the statement above, it is also a claim, to be used in order to obtain citizenship, but also to contest the citizenship claim of others, whether would-be citizens or those who already possess that status. Thus, just as rights are not an exclusive privilege of citizens, citizenship does not guarantee equal rights, as indicated by the many groups of citizens (minorities, women, the working poor) who remain fundamentally disadvantaged despite citizenship's promise of equality. Possessing nationality in the country where they reside, they are nonetheless second-class citizens.

Regardless of formal citizenship regime and foreign-born persons' own citizenship status, the very fact of foreign birth is likely to put belonging in question, rendering the immigrants' claims for membership vulnerable to those with different conceptions of the national community. Precisely because immigration comprises a social dilemma that liberal societies cannot escape, it is a source of continuing controversy, reminding the immigrants that people like them, indeed, often their own kinsmen and compatriots, are not wanted. Moreover, foreign origins, even if distant, can be

grounds for doubt. Thus, even in the United States, dominant group members view minorities as susceptible to dual loyalties and hence less patriotic than ‘unhyphenated’ Americans.

Thus, the dual quality of membership allow it to be unpacked into two dimensions, one relating to citizenship status, the other relating to the political culture in which citizenship can be practiced. Here we could draw a distinction between monistic political cultures, such as those of contemporary France or the early 20th century U.S. and its insistence that immigrants “swat the hyphen”, and the more pluralistic political cultures of the settler societies of North America and the Antipodes at the turn of the 21st century. Rather than reproducing yet another dualism, these differences are better thought of as continuous in form, and also the object of struggle, over which different groups, committed to different visions of the national community, engage in conflict. And unlike the politics of citizenship status regimes, where powerful forces are pushing toward some degree of convergence, variations in political culture are so deeply embedded in national histories as to produce continuing cross-state differences.

Navigating the context: Political Opportunity Structures and Group Identity

The population movements across borders that converge on democratic societies produce a new political phenomenon: persons who begin their lives in the new country formally excluded from the polity. As we have argued above, presence on the territory of a democratic state provides the potential for participation in politics, with politics conceptualized in so wide a fashion as to encompass any form of civic or collective activity, beyond the private, and possibly, religious sphere. But that potential is highly contested, due to immigrants’ foreign origin and the controversies inevitably sparked by ongoing immigration. Moreover, the scope for participation varies, depending on the nature of the regimes that allow immigrants to formally enter the polity of the society in which they reside. Even that passage does not ensure full membership: possessing status

citizenship, immigrants may be treated as second-class citizens and/or so perceive themselves, conditions that will affect their ability to engage with and belong in the body politic to which they have become newly attached.

Thus another defining characteristic of the migrant experience are the controversies inevitably unleashed by international migration, which may both trigger engagement with politics and at the same time furnish the seeds out of which identity is made. On the one hand, adverse political reactions to the influx of foreigners are an endemic condition of the rich democracies. On the other hand, immigrants and their offspring learn more than the ropes of the countries were they reside: they come to absorb many of its expectations and values, including an aspiration to membership. Precisely, because the cultural assimilation and political re-socialization of the foreigners is so successful, adverse reactions to immigration and efforts to restrict the national community *can* provide a catalyst to an ethnic response, generating a perception of “linked fate,” diminishing the impact of class differences among persons sharing a common ethnic origin. Furthermore, as long as immigrants and their descendants remain socioeconomically and geographically distinct, even while talking and behaving much like dominant group members, ethnicity and interest are likely to converge. For these reasons, ethnicity is likely to provide an effective means of political claims-making and mobilization, as a result of which immigrants and their offspring are likely to follow a distinct path as they enter and move through the new body politic.

These traits are generic to the migrant situation in the advanced democracies, though differences in immigration histories, citizenship regimes, and political cultures give rise to significant variation. Equally important is the way in which the *specific* conditions of the political environment link up with the political claims making of migrant actors themselves. This way of framing the question is central to the political opportunity structure (POS) approach. This perspective has long

been used by the social movement literature: here it has been used to explain how country specific institutional arrangements shape the tactics and identities of political actors that engage in protest and other forms of collective action. More recently, POS has been employed to study the political mobilization of minorities and immigrants, either to account for variation across differently categorized minorities within a country or across different nation-state contexts (Koopmans et al. 2005).

Following the POS approach minority identities are formed and dissolved in the very process of making political claims. For example, the way in which states categorize their population in respect to immigrant background (i.e. foreigners vs. natives in Germany and Switzerland versus racial/ethnic categories in England) shapes the ways in which immigrants make political claims and ultimately also come to define their political and social identity. Thus in Britain, where policy is decidedly framed in multi-ethnic/multi-racial terms, immigrant groups were much more likely to make claims framed in an anti-discrimination and unequal treatment while in France “the absence of a legal and discursive framework of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination [...] gives migrants few opportunities for demands against racial, ethnic or cultural biases in social institutions” (Koopmans et al. 2005: 141).

In principle, the POS approach should provide an opportunity to analyze the interdependence between migrant political actors and their context. In reality most studies focus on the environmental determinants, leaving the process by which the context shapes migrants claims making underspecified and giving “minimal attention to being devoted to the strategic choices made by immigrant ethnic actors themselves (Bousetta 2000: 235). For example, while POS approaches generally demonstrate the match between opportunity structure and the kind of claims that immigrants pursue, they don’t explain how or why, implying that there is a natural fit between the opportunity structure and the kinds of claims and identities that immigrant groups tend to pursue.

A part of the problem is that POS assumes what need to be explained: both clearly defined ethnic groups and of self-conscious, fully informed political actors are taken as given. Other approaches suffer from similar shortcomings. For example, in the United States, ethnic politics has long provided the main paradigm for studying the political incorporation of immigrants, focusing on the factor shape the political participation of minorities, the coalitions they establish, and the extent to which they can realize their policy goals. Yet, as Lee (2008) notes in a recent critical review, a “preordained identity to politics link” is often taken for granted, distorting “our understanding of race and ethnicity, especially when taken as prior to, rather than subject to, empirical study.” (p. 461). Similarly, in political psychology the political relevance of ethnic identifications functions as a common tacit assumption, though the specific meanings and salience of those identities is rarely explored.

Of course there are significant differences across populations (and countries): not all arrive with the same resources or undergo the same experiences: some are more homogeneous than others; some arrive under adverse circumstances, some enter under more favorable conditions, encountering a warmer welcome. Still, political opportunity structures do not confront ethnic or immigrant “groups” as such; rather, they are encountered by specific political entrepreneurs from immigrant or ethnic populations, who in turn, seek to mobilize or organize their putative-co-ethnics. For these ethnic political entrepreneurs, the level of cohesion or “groupness” or differentiation within a community becomes a central component of the political opportunity structure.

The sending context: emigrant politics and emigration policy

Looked at from the standpoint of the receiving society, international migration imports a foreign element, comprising a presence on the host state’s territory, but largely standing outside its

polity. But the same picture appears somewhat different, if looked at from the standpoint of *emigrants* and the sending states from which they come.

In this light, the fact that international migrations inherently yield cross-border connections provides the point of departure. The many exchanges linking places of origin and destination effectively knit “here” and “there” together, facilitating and motivating continued involvement with home country politics, while diminishing its costs (Soehl and Waldinger, 2010). However, it is movement into a new, separate political environment that enhances migrants’ potential to influence home matters. Residence in a rich country gives the migrants resources not possessed before; that the rich country is also democratic yields the rights needed to put those resources to political use; because the receiving state’s borders keeps out the tentacles of the sending state migrants also gain political protection against home state interests that might seek to control them (Waldinger, 2011).

Though migration can be a source of homeland leverage for those still interested in the place left behind, displacement to the territory of a different state, representing a new people yields impacts that work in the opposite direction. Homeland political involvement tends to entail high costs and low benefits. While not the only reason to participate in politics, pursuit of material benefits – whether individual or collective – is one of the factors that lead people to spend time and effort on political matters. Home states, however, can do relatively little for the migrants in the territory where they actually live (Fitzgerald 2009) reducing motivations to purely symbolic or intrinsic rewards, which are unlikely to be compelling for most. Options for participation are also limited, with obstacles high. Although home country political parties maintain foreign branches and candidates travel abroad to garner expatriate support and material assistance, campaigning on foreign soil costs considerably more than on native grounds, especially if the former is a developing and the latter a developed society. Where they exist, expatriate electoral systems might attract

greater migrant attention, but none can reproduce the national voting infrastructure on the territory of another country.

Absent mobilization, the pressures to detach from home country politics intensify. Political life is fundamentally social: participation responds to the level and intensity of political involvement in one's own social circles, which in turn generate political information. However, the circumstances of settlement are likely to lead to spiralling dis-engagement. Even areas of high ethnic density rarely possess the ethnic institutional completeness and political infrastructure that would stimulate engagement with home country matters. The migrants' status as immigrants orients them toward receiving state institutions, and media practices – even if conveyed via a mother tongue – provide at best modest coverage of home country developments. Absent powerful inducements, clear signals, and the examples of significant others, the costs of participation may easily outweigh its benefits. Since, by contrast, immigrants often realize that they will settle in the places where they live and where political participation is also easier, disconnection from home country politics is the typical pattern.

On the other hand, almost all migrations include at least some persons who remain impelled by homeland matters. Even though the rank-and-file may disengage, migration generates resources and provides protection for the minority of homeland activists, furnishing them with significant leverage. Moreover, the hard core is rarely alone, as there is often a large constituency that resonates to the homeland call, at least occasionally. In general, social identities change more slowly than social connections: even if no longer sending remittances or making periodic trips home, many immigrants retain an emotional attachment to their country of origin. Consequently, symbolic, homeland-oriented ethnicity persists, providing a base for homeland activists to mobilize (or manipulate).

Towards a political sociology of migration

Population movements across borders are propelled by a search to get ahead, as access to the territory of a rich country opens up resources unavailable in the poorer countries from which the migrants come. Though the populace may grumble, employers in the rich democracies of the north have repeatedly shown themselves ready to accept foreign workers. Likewise, sending states, which often decry the discrimination and exploitation that the emigrants encounter, nonetheless welcome the remittances earned through hard labor on foreign soil.

While economically driven, international migrations inevitably yield unintended, deeply significant political consequences, disrupting the neat congruence between “nations” and states thought to underpin the contemporary political order. As seen from the perspective of receiving states, migration changes the location of *aliens*, moving them from foreign territories on to native grounds. As seen from the perspective of sending states, migration shifts the location of *nationals*, transferring from the homeland on to foreign soil abroad. Either way, state, society, and nation are no longer one and the same.

As aliens, immigrants start off outside the polity, which is why the standard political science concerns related to formal political participation initially do not apply. Rather, the crux of the matter involves the relationship between the *politics of immigration* and *immigrant politics*. The former entails the rights and entitlements associated with the liminal status of alien residence on the territory of another people as well as the policies affecting the passage across the internal boundary of citizenship and into the polity. The latter, by contrast, concerns the means and mechanisms by which aliens engage in political activity and possibly acquire citizenship, foreigners learn the rules of a new national political situation, and foreign-born, naturalized citizens gain political incorporation and acceptance.

A mirror set of questions asks what happens when both emigrants and sending states try to keep up the connection to the body politic left behind. *Emigrant politics* concerns the efforts of the

emigrants to engage with the homeland polity, whether seeking to create new states, overthrow regimes, lobby host governments on behalf of home states, participate in home state elections, change home state electoral and citizenship laws so as to allow for expatriate voting and dual citizenship. Those activities interact with the *politics of emigration*: sending state policies oriented toward the expatriates, seeking either to resolve the problems of *citizens living abroad*, where they suffer from the liabilities of alien status, or reconnecting the *emigrants* back to the place from which they came.

While these are the general parameters governing the politics of migration, patterns on the ground inevitably take a distinct form, affected by political environments in home and host societies, circumstances of migration, the resources that migrants both import and acquire, as well as the historical experience of both entry *and* exit. In the end, neither scholars, nor states, nor migrants can escape the political consequences generated by population movements across state boundaries, which is why the students of migration need to put the political sociology of migration at the top of their research agenda.

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