International Migration in Europe: Critical Success Absorption Factors

Peter Nijkamp* and Katharina Spieß

Europe is going through a phase of rapid transition and restructuring, characterized by far reaching features such as the completion of the internal EC market, alliances with EFTA and former Comecon countries, free movements of capital and labour and persistent regional disparities. In light of these structural changes and the fact that Western Europe in general has in the past decade shown a significant rise in the share of foreign people, questions on international migration in Europe—and particularly the question of critical factors influencing the future in-migration flows into Western Europe—have become an important issue in social science research. Much of the existing literature on international migration in the European context concentrates on empirical and policy oriented descriptive issues. Theoretical contributions concerning international migration are by far not so abundant. The paper aims to offer an overview of the emerging literature in this field.

After the provision of some empirical evidence on European international migration and related background factors in the first section of the paper, this paper will classify some of the recent literature from different disciplines explaining international migration, notably the equilibrium theory, the historical structural approach, the utility maximization, the welfare state, the regulatory, the tension, and the system approach. In addition, an exploration of critical success absorption factors, interpreted as dominant factors which not only lead to the decision of individuals or groups to migrate to a specific country of destination, but which are also of great importance in getting settled in a foreign country, will be given. A categorization of critical success absorption factors into three broader groups viz. (1) state to state relations, (2) mass culture connections and (3), family and social networks is also offered. Especially the nature and form of immigration policies seems to be an important critical success absorption factor. Finally, an attempt towards an integrated view on international migration and absorption mechanisms is made by incorporating also spatial aspects. The analytical conclusion is that it is a potentially fruitful research task to analyze absorption issues of foreign migrants by using the wealth of knowledge from ecological competition theory and the stress threshold value model.

1. Introduction

In recent years we have witnessed an increasing interest in Europe in international migration issues. The completion of the internal market by 1993 provoked much debate on the consequences of a free mobility of goods, people and information in the EC countries. Also, the expected migration waves from former communist countries in East Europe created an intensified concern about the EC as a magnet for international migrants (cf. Ghosh, 1991). And finally, the increasingly important phenomenon of illegal migrants in Europe led to doomsday scenarios of the U.S.–Mexico border situation. It seems as though Europe is entering the ‘age of migration’ (see Castles and Miller, 1993).

It should be noted that even without the above megatrends EC–Europe—with a clear exception of Ireland—has in the past decade shown a significant rise in the share of foreign people (see

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Figure 1.1. Given the current aging trends, the EC countries—again with the exception of Ireland—would even lose population without immigration (see Figure 1.2, and also Nijkamp et al., 1991).

The question whether economic integration would generate significantly higher migration flows is not easy to answer, but a somewhat older study by Böhning (1974) shows that for European countries the demand for labour was a far more important motive than integration per se. Feithen (1986) has demonstrated that for international labour migration in Europe push-pull factors (e.g., high unemployment rates in the country of origin) appear to be of decisive importance. Observations from the past years confirm that massive migration flows as a result of economic integration in Europe have not taken place, and as far as migration has taken place there is not a significant difference between less and more developed countries (cf. Garson, 1992).

Besides intra-EC migration there is also an increasing concern about migration into EC countries from so-called third countries. The past years have shown an increasing flow of third country in-migrants, subdivided into asylum seekers, Aussiedlers (ethnic Germans) and remaining migrants (see Figure 1.3).

In view of the rising flows of third countries in-migrants, all EC countries have adopted in the meantime a more restrictive in-migration policy. This implies that in the foreseeable future in-migration flows in EC countries will depend on various critical factors:
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Fig. 1.3 Migrants into EC countries.

--- the socio-economic conditions in the countries of origin
--- the socio-economic perspectives (and needs) in the country of destination
--- the socio-cultural distance between countries of origin and destination (e.g., the existence in the country of destination of a critical mass of foreign people with the same cultural background or the existence of a favourable absorption mechanism for foreigners)
--- the existence of regulatory policy regimes for foreign in-migrants (including enforcement of regulations against illegal migration).

The relative importance of the above factors is largely unknown as yet. International migration has therefore become an important issue in social science research, but it is a field fraught with many uncertainties. In light of the above observations, the present paper serves to address critical factors (including policy regulations) that impact on international migration in the European context.

Before we give a survey of various classes of explanatory frameworks for (international) migration in section 3, we analyze in section 2 some global trends of the European migration history at the present time in order to give our further theoretical analysis the frame of realistic facts. In section 4 the attention will in particular be focused on cultural-economic backgrounds and socio-economic absorption and support mechanisms (including regulatory systems) which influence the direction and order of magnitude of international migration; that means we are specifically focusing on critical success absorption factors. Finally, section 5 can be regarded as an attempt for an integrative view of the previous discussions to end up with an outlook for future research.

2. Global Trends in the Past

A glance at Europe's migration history in the past two centuries shows that by and large, Europe may to be characterized as an emigration continent. Before the Second World War it was not Europe which absorbed foreigners, but on the contrary it was predominantly the Europeans who were absorbed mainly by the three big immigration countries, the United States of America, Canada and Australia (e.g., Borrie, 1992). Talking about Europe—and especially Western Europe—as an immigration continent was certainly not possible before the Second World War. And even in the post-war period not all Western European countries have been immigration countries for this whole period, as is shown by Table 2.1 for the period of 1960 until 1988.

For the year 1990, a comparison between selected European countries (see Table 2.2) shows that as already touched upon in the introduction that only Ireland with negative net migration—may
Table 2.1 Average annual migration flows to and from selected European countries, 1960–1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>69,057</td>
<td>65,583</td>
<td>64,688</td>
<td>58,271</td>
<td>47,862</td>
<td>45,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany, Fed. Rep.</td>
<td>576,211</td>
<td>706,144</td>
<td>873,051</td>
<td>527,483</td>
<td>502,179</td>
<td>554,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>57,746</td>
<td>71,009</td>
<td>89,140</td>
<td>97,571</td>
<td>79,419</td>
<td>88,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>29,226</td>
<td>45,404</td>
<td>43,342</td>
<td>41,368</td>
<td>32,212</td>
<td>41,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>186,600</td>
<td>186,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emigrants</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>35,271</td>
<td>41,503</td>
<td>47,615</td>
<td>52,990</td>
<td>58,663</td>
<td>54,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>51,218</td>
<td>60,329</td>
<td>61,179</td>
<td>59,737</td>
<td>61,962</td>
<td>54,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>15,226</td>
<td>19,842</td>
<td>35,697</td>
<td>23,897</td>
<td>27,396</td>
<td>22,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>207,600</td>
<td>214,000</td>
</tr>
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<td>Net Migration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>33,785</td>
<td>24,080</td>
<td>17,073</td>
<td>5,281</td>
<td>−10,801</td>
<td>−6,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>6,528</td>
<td>10,679</td>
<td>27,961</td>
<td>37,833</td>
<td>17,457</td>
<td>34,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>25,562</td>
<td>7,644</td>
<td>17,472</td>
<td>4,816</td>
<td>19,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−21,000</td>
<td>−27,600</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source: Zlotnik and Hovy (1990, Table 1)

nowadays be characterized as an emigration country.

In presenting the patterns of European migration hereafter in more detail, we will first summarize the different types of international migration flows since the Second World War (see Borrie, 1992; Coleman, 1993; Fassmann and Münz, 1992; Zlotnik and Hovy, 1990). Next we will describe the present composition of foreign population in six selected countries of the European Community and explore whether it is possible to identify special patterns (see Fassmann and Münz, 1992). Finally, we will take a very short look at the distribution of various types of migration over selected European countries (see Coleman, 1993).

A first type of migration flow into Europe, which can be positioned at different time periods since 1950, is linked to the postwar decolonization process. Besides the return of European
Table 2.2 Recent gross inflows of migrants into selected European countries, 1990, by type (thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of destination</th>
<th>Labour migrants</th>
<th>Ethnic migrants</th>
<th>Asylum seekers (gross inflow)</th>
<th>All foreign (excluding asylum seekers, includes some EC)</th>
<th>Total gross inflow, including asylum seekers</th>
<th>Total population (1,000s)</th>
<th>Gross immigration per 1,000 (includes asylum seekers)</th>
<th>Net migration per 1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>103.4</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>123.1</td>
<td>145.9</td>
<td>7,660</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>9,948</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>51.35</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>117.8</td>
<td>56.304</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>138.6</td>
<td>397.1</td>
<td>193.1</td>
<td>649.5</td>
<td>1239.7</td>
<td>62.679</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.057</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>57,576</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>14,893</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>4,233</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,337</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>38,925</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>8,527</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>101.4</td>
<td>137.2</td>
<td>6,674</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>57,323</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>353.2</td>
<td>397.1</td>
<td>426.8</td>
<td>1212.1</td>
<td>2027.1</td>
<td>353,778</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Blanks indicate that data are not available. Data on labour migrants to EC countries do not usually include citizens of other EC countries.
Austria: 'All foreign' figure is an estimate of net migration.
Germany: data refer to the area of the Federal Republic before re-unification. The total of ethnic migrants refers only to 'Aussiedler' from Eastern Europe and the USSR, not from the former East Germany, of whom there were 238,282 from January 1990 to June 1990.
All foreign figure is for 1989. 'Total inflow' for 1990 includes that figure (Meyer 1992).
Spain: 'All foreign' total is for 1989.
Switzerland: excludes seasonal workers.
Net migration includes persons of all citizenship. Foreign immigrants excludes asylum seekers.
Source: Coleman (1993, Table 1)

Colonists and colonial officers, countries like Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal, which had colonies in the past, recorded sizeable immigration flows by migrant workers from their former overseas territories (1).

A second type of immigration flows played a major role in the 1950s until the mid 1970s, when

(1) During the period 1954-1962 more than one million former French residents of Algeria resettled in France (Fassmann and Munz, 1992).
a number of countries—notably Switzerland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Benelux countries and Sweden—started to meet part of their growing demand for labour by recruiting workers in several Mediterranean countries. In the initial period of hiring these guestworkers, Italy was the most important recruitment area, while in the 1960s Spain and Portugal became the most important recruitment and emigration countries. In the 1970s, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia became increasingly more important countries of origin. In the early 1970s, the employment of foreign labour reached its maximum in the post-war period. In 1970, West-Germany was leading with nearly 2.1 million foreign workers.

After the oil price shock and the economic recession in the mid-1970s the recruitment of foreign labour stopped and more restrictive immigration regulations were imposed. In view of the reduced absorption capacity of the labour market, the aim was to stop further immigration. But these policies had only a short term effect. This is especially true for Germany, where the average annual net migration flows of foreigners decreased from 297,040 in the time period of 1970-74 to 32,370 in the period of 1975-79 (Zlotnik and Hovy, 1990, Table 3). The long-term effect however shows no reduction in immigration flows: after 1985 almost all Western European countries experienced a recovery of their annual migration inflows of foreigners.

Despite the formal cessation of labour migration it is however much more important to mention that this cessation has now led to a rise in migration for family reunification. This third type of European post-war migration, namely family migration, is one of the major migration flows of the recent past and present time. In the mean time a new phenomenon in this context has emerged viz. family formation migration, that means a marriage with a foreign partner (2). Furthermore one side-effect of the increasing restrictive immigration regulations since the mid 1970s should be added, viz. the rising number of illegal immigrants into Western Europe (3).

Since the 1980s a new pattern of labour migration developed. Besides the North-West European countries also most Southern European countries, particularly Italy, have become countries of immigration. In addition it is noteworthy that much of the "official" labour migration within and into Europe at present is "high level manpower [...] and to a lesser extent, with high level manual skills" (Colemann, 1993, p. 14).

With growing political conflicts, civil wars and economic crises in the Middle-East, South America and Africa in the recent past—in addition to the above mentioned increasing flows of foreign labour and family migration—, the flow of asylum seekers into Western Europe is increasing since the 1980. In 1991 Western Europe received 539,000 applications for asylum (Coleman, 1993). As a special case the emigration flows in 1991/1992 out of the former Yugoslavia—as a result of the war between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina should not be forgotten, as they are the largest single wave of emigration since 1946/47 (Coleman, 1993).

The above described types of migration can in general be characterized as south-north migration streams. East-west migration within, in and out of Western Europe on the other hand have by far not played such an important role in the post-war European migration history as south-north migration. East-west migration was greatly reduced for 40 years due to the political division of Europe. Mass migration mainly occurred in cases of political crisis (4). With the end of the socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe however, east-west migration flows have been intensified. Particularly the large flows of people with a German origin out of Poland, the former

(2) In a number of European countries such family migration is the biggest single component of gross inflows except for asylum seekers (for instance, in 1988 90 percent into Belgium and West-Germany, and 70 percent into France) (Coleman, 1993).
(3) Böhning estimates the number of illegal immigrants in Western Europe at about two million plus 500,000 persons refused asylum (Colemann, 1993).
(4) For example, the emigration flows out of Hungary as a result from the revolution of 1956.
(5) In 1989, Germany counted 377,000 ethnic Germans, the so called "Aussiedler" (Coleman, 1993).
Table 2.3 Foreign resident population in six major receiving countries of Western Europe: Percent distribution of foreign residents by country of origin within the total foreign population of that origin residing in six receiving countries, and total foreign resident population by country of origin and country of residence, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>West Germany</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>FRP (1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East-Central Europe</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>3,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (percent)</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (1,000s)</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>3,608</td>
<td>5,242</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>12,030</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Asterix indicates no data are available.
Sources from Fassmann and Münz: OECD/SOPEMI (1992, several tables)
Source: Fassmann and Münz (1992, Table 3)

Besides these two main patterns of European postwar migration, Fassmann and Münz (1992) mention also a third main pattern of European migration: the migration between hinterlands and home countries. This means that European migration clearly shows privileged relations between countries. A further specification of this statement can be found in an analysis of the percentages of the foreign resident population in six major receiving countries of Western Europe.

As Table 2.3 indicates almost all Algerians, Tunisians, Portuguese and Moroccans in these six countries live in France. The vast majority of migrants from East–Central Europe are to be found in Germany, while in addition, some 72 percent of all ex–Yugoslavs and 74 percent of Turks reside in Germany. Nine of the ten Greeks living in the six major receiving countries also reside in Germany. Most Finnish emigrants moved to Sweden, while most Austrian migrants emigrated to Germany. For the United Kingdom, it may be pointed out that it absorbs almost all Irish (outside Ireland), and almost all Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis living in Europe (6). Migrants from Soviet-Union, and Rumania should be mentioned in this context (5).
Italy and Spain follow a less specific pattern. Italians outside Italy, who are registered in the six major receiving countries are mainly spread over Germany (37.8 percent), Switzerland (26.7 percent) and France (17.5 percent). The majority of Spanish foreigners can be found in France (44.4 percent), Germany or Switzerland.

For the whole European Community, it appears that from the total of 13.4 million foreigners in the EC in 1989 49 percent were citizens of non-European countries, 38 percent citizens of other EC states, while only 13 percent were citizens from other European countries. Among the non-European countries the Turkish people are with 31 percent of all Non-European citizens in Europe by far the largest group, while all Africans represent about 36 percent. Migrants from Asia and South and North America together represent about 33 percent of the foreign citizens of non-European countries (Coleman, 1993).

Finally we will touch upon the question, whether special types of migrants can be associated with special countries. Even though we mentioned already briefly this question above, an explicit look at the gross flows of migrants into Western Europe by types of immigration (labour migrants, ethnic migrants and asylum seekers) in Table 2.2 shows that ethnic migrants are only to be found in Germany. Muus and Grujjsen (1991) mention in this context in addition the ethnic Greeks coming from Eastern Europe. For the group of the asylum seekers, it is noteworthy that Germany—followed by France—seems to be the most attractive country for them. The majority of labour migrants also seems to prefer Germany as the most attractive country of destination. Austria appears to be positioned in the second place in terms of absolute numbers of labour migrants. These high (absolute) numbers of all types of migrant inflows to Germany are paralleled by the fact that this country has in absolute numbers the largest foreign population, even without taking the ethnic Germans into account. In a relative sense however, by taking the foreign population as a percentage of the total population, Switzerland is with 16.5 percent foreign population the European country with the highest percentage of foreigners among its population (Coleman, 1993).

Looking on past and current trends in stocks and flows of international migration is one important issue in migration research—an explanation of these trends without concentrating (only) on country and time specific events however is another important issue which demands for theoretical contributions in this field. In the next section we will concentrate on such theoretical contributions to international migration. The idea is to illustrate some examples of theoretical contributions in order to show how different approaches analyze international migration in a more general sense. By referring to various approaches we always have the question on critical success absorption factors as one specific topic of our analysis in mind.

3. Theoretical Contribution to International Migration analysis: Selected Examples

Offering in this section a selection of explanatory frameworks for international migration, we are aware of the fact, that it is clear that there are a variety of scientific explanations depending on the analysis (e.g., micro versus macro) etc. Despite the myriad of publications on migration between countries it turns out that various classes of explanatory theories can be distinguished which have quite some common features. In the context of this section we will limit nevertheless to a concise description and evaluation of the following (nonexhaustive) set of main classes:

— the equilibrium approach (Subsection 3.1).
— the historical-structural approach (Subsection 3.2)
— the utility maximizing approach (Subsection 3.3)
— the welfare state approach (Subsection 3.4)
— the regulatory approach (Subsection 3.5)

(6) This information is not included in the above mentioned Table 2.3, it refers to Coleman, 1993, Table 2a.
Because especially in the field of international migration research, looking only in one scientific discipline, can lead to the loss of some other very important aspects, we select examples out of different disciplines (e.g., economics, sociology, political science).

In the following each of the above mentioned frameworks will concisely be described.

### 3.1 The Equilibrium Approach

The equilibrium approach to international migration represents a main direction in the explanation of international movements of people (see for an evaluation Wood, 1982 and Bach and Schraml, 1982). The equilibrium model of migration focuses the attention primarily on the rational calculus of the individual action. Migration is in general regarded to be an individual choice process which can be cast in the framework of a neoclassical explanatory model. In general, the equilibrium approach can be characterized as a framework which can be characterized as one which conceptualizes migration as the geographical mobility of workers who are responding to imbalances in spatial distribution of land, labour, capital and natural resources. Migration streams are seen as the cumulative result of individual decisions based on a rational evaluation of the benefits to be gained and costs entailed in moving. In the long run, migration will lead to a gradual convergence in the level of economic growth and social well being. In the context of absorption we can summarize that the equilibrium approach sees so-called critical success absorption factors mainly in employment opportunities with higher returns.

It is clear that this equilibrium approach may be criticised from various view points. Wood (1982) has pointed out three main critical points. The first relates to the fact that – especially in the context of developing countries – it is evident that geographic mobility of labour does not necessarily lead to an equilibrium situation, because migration may often be seen as an indicator of regional disparities which leads to a further increase of inequalities. A second main critical point of Wood refers to the a-historical character of the equilibrium approach. Wood refers to empirical facts, which run counter this approach, notably that many “backward” economies throughout history have not spontaneously exported labour and – when labour was needed – it had to be coerced out of them. As a third point Wood criticizes the reductionism of the above discussed approach, especially the failure to account for non-economic forms of forced migration.

### 3.2 The Historical Structural Approach

A second main direction of migration theories, the historical-structural approach, focuses on the origin of the costs and benefits faced by the potential migrants. Migration is seen as a macro-social process. Even though this approach is – because of the variety of considerations included – not so easy to characterize as the above equilibrium approach, in general this approach considers migration with reference to a broader context of socioeconomic and political changes. The principal insights of the structural perspective are mainly to be found in the historical materialism, according to which migration is deeply rooted in the pressures and counterpressures in national economies, which lead to changes in the organization of production. Structural factors influence labour mobility through their impact on the degree and the spatial distribution of the demand for labour. Patterns of migration are thus explained in terms of changes in the organization of production which unequally affect the fortune of different classes. Migration in conceptualized as a class phenomenon where the unit of analysis is the migration stream. Critical success absorption factors are in general structural factors like socioeconomic and political developments of capitalist economies.

A major advantage of the historical-structural approach is its attention to structural factors in migration patterns, but it has also various weaknesses. Wood (1982) claims that no attention is
paid to specific factors that motivate individual actors. The decision to migrate is implicitly assumed to be a rational one, but no attempt is made to conceptualize the nature of the decision-making process. Also Bach and Schraml (1982) criticize the view that migrants are mere “agents” of social change carrying the necessary attributes of labour to satisfy the abstract requirements of the general law of capitalist accumulation. In addition, Wood criticizes a discontinuity between units of analysis. While patterns of migration are explained in terms of changes in the organization of production which unequally affect the fortune of different classes, no necessary correlation between that particular social category and the propensity of individuals to migrate does exist. Movements over classes are pointed out by Wood (1982) as an example of the facts that changes in the economy do not necessarily have a direct effect on movements of specific classes. Bach and Schraml (1982) add as another critical remark that—as the crisis of the mid 1970s showed—a continuous influx of immigrant labour is no longer a structural necessity for late capitalist societies.

Taking the differences between the equilibrium and the historical-structural approach into account, Wood suggests to integrate the approaches by shifting the focus of migration towards an intermediate unit of analysis, namely the household (7), and then to investigate both structural and behavioral elements of migration.

The starting point of Wood’s approach is that he conceptualizes the dynamic character of the household’s behaviour as a series of “sustenance strategies” by which the household seeks to achieve a fit between its consumption necessities, the labour power as its disposal, and the alternatives for generating monetary and non-monetary income. Thus “sustenance strategies” reflect the way in which the household adapts itself to the forces that lie beyond the household unit. The level of living of a population is determined by the effectiveness of the “sustenance strategies” that households formulate within the limitations imposed by the socio-economic and physical environment. Geographic mobility is seen as one of the possible components of these strategies. Migration is likely to occur, when the sum of monetary and nonmonetary income is not sufficient to reach (or to increase) the desired quantity and quality of consumption and investment. But this is only seen as one of various compensatory measures, so that migration is essentially an activity embedded in and conditional upon the success or failure of the initiatives undertaken by the household in interaction with its social, economic and political environment. As a critical remark to Wood’s approach we add, that his conceptual approach is no more than a framework, which could be taken as a starting point for further developing such a more comprehensive approach. In the framework of our paper it is most interesting, that the question of absorption is only mentioned in the sense, that a country is absorbing migrants when this country fulfils the conditions for the household maintenance and reproduction.

Bach and Schraml (1982)—in contrast to Wood—think that his approach does not necessarily accomplish an integration of the historical-structural and equilibrium approaches. For them even at the household level of analysis the vast differences between the structural and the individual approach remain. They see the only main difference between Wood’s conceptual approach and the neoclassical principle in the fact that the direction of causation is from structure to individual and not from individual to structure. They claim that the behaviour of a household is only seen as an aggregation of individual behaviour and not as a collective action with patterns of obligation and dependencies. Mainly built on this critical issue, they present a framework in which migration as a collective action is seen as a starting point of analysis. In general they regard their frameworks as an advance of the historical-structuralist understanding of migration. Accordingly, they note that the decisions behind migration are equally products of history and organized by a set of dynamic as well as pre-established social relationships. They underline the fact that in contrast to

(7) For his analysis Wood characterizes a household mainly as an economic unit which is generating and disposing of a collective income fund.
the transfer of other commodities, the transfer of labour carries with it movement of real historically active people who are fully capable of organizing themselves in relation to a variety of groups, tasks and cultural symbols. According to Bach and Schraml (1982) it is an analytical task for migration research to understand the relationships like families and kinship relation because in the end these are the organizing relationships. This means that it is the social relationships in which persons are embedded, that are collectively and personally restraining migration and in the end are the explanation for the limits of accessibility of labour.

To summarize, the importance of Bach and Schraml’s approach lies in the emphasis on the fact that people are acting and reacting to and dependent on other people: in other words, the authors underline the importance of social networks in the migration process. However the question how these networks influence the decision to migrate and which role they play in relation to absorption of a specific country is not answered by them.

3.3 The Utility Maximizing Approach

A more modern version and extension of the economic equilibrium approach to migration can be found in Borjas (1989). As the author points out, this more recent approach to the economics of (im)migration is based on two main assumptions of neoclassical theory. The first assumption that the individual is a utility maximizer was already referred to above in the context of the equilibrium approach. The individual behaviour however is constrained by the financial situation of the actor and by the migration policies of the source country and the immigration policies of potential host countries. Based on the second assumption that exchanges among various players lead to an equilibrium in the market place, Borjas discusses extensively the existence of an immigration market, which is acting as a sieve for migrants across potential host countries. In this immigration market the different host countries function as the suppliers, making migration “offers” in respect to a certain set of immigration regulations from which individuals on the demand side compare and choose, and so allocate themselves in the end nonrandomly among countries. Especially interesting in our context is his assumption that host countries with a certain set of immigration regulations attract different types of persons.

Based on these main assumptions, Borjas concentrates then on three questions, the determinants of the size and skill composition of immigrant flows to any particular host country, the process of assimilation of migrants in the host country, and the adjustment process after immigrating in the host countries’ labour market.

To answer these questions he develops a simple model of immigration consisting of two countries, a source and a host country. A special earnings function built on individual observable and unobservable skills is an additional assumption. The explicit behavioral assumption is that the individual decision to migrate in based on a comparison of incomes between the two countries, so that individuals tend to reside in the country with the largest earnings net of migration costs. An obvious result of Borjas’ theoretical approach is the fact that income-maximizers will migrate away from low income areas to high income areas when mobility costs are low. Next, the influence of observable skills on the decision to migrate in the neoclassical approach (taking education as an example) implies that workers flow to the country that is willing to pay most for them. Furthermore, an analysis of unobserved characteristics shows that the selection on the basis of these abilities depends entirely on the extent of income inequality in the host and source country. Borjas shows that there is no theoretical reason for presuming that immigration flows are always composed of the “best and brightest”. As a main result he claims that, as economic and political conditions change, economic theory predicts that size, direction and composition of immigrant flows will also change: “there is no universal law that must characterize all immigration flows” (Borjas, 1989, p. 471, 472).

Borjas’s approach provides an original contribution, but it falls short in that collective learning
mechanisms, social adaptive behaviour and regulatory regimes are largely neglected. We conclude here that Borjas' work is still a partial approach, even though he mentions that the individual decision is restricted by migration regulations.

3.4 The Welfare State Approach

An interesting class of migration analyses refers to the importance of the welfare state in connection with international migration (cf. Freeman, 1986). Freeman's approach, which may be characterized as a welfare state approach may be positioned in the field of political economy. The starting point of his analysis is to understand the development of a welfare state as a dialectic between the distributive logic of closure and distributive logic of openness. The former is related to the fact that the welfare state has to restrain entry to preserve the advantages of itself. It has to restrict benefits and rights only to members. But at the same time the welfare states are on the other hand deeply embedded in the global political and economical order, and it is to this fact the latter logic refers to. The national economies of the welfare states are engaged in systematic exchanges with this larger global system.

In this openness however, Freeman sees several problems for the welfare state as well. Looking at the wide inequalities between the benefit levels and living standards that exist both among welfare states themselves and between them and the outside world, he notes that these inequalities are the main reason for external pressure from the international economy to disrupt and threaten the privileges that the welfare state represent. As the most important and directly relevant external economic factor from the point of view of the welfare state, Freeman addresses the issues of foreign labour. In line with the classical economic migration approach, Freeman seeks the explanation for migration in wage differences. But in contrast to the classical economic approach, he underlines the importance of indirect wages in the context of international migration. "Along with the high real, direct wages the social wage is part of the package of compensation that exerts an attractive pull on workers in less prosperous societies drawing them to the rich countries in anticipation of better lives" (Freeman, 1986, p. 55).

But for Freeman it is not just a simple attraction of migrants by the welfare state, but rather the availability of the welfare state benefits to indigenous workers which helps the sequence of events which create the demand for foreign labour. In this context foreign labour is seen as the only real alternative to the elimination of the privileges of indigenous work force, but only if new workers are excluded from the rights of the welfare state. In this inflexibility of the welfare state’s labour market, Freeman looks amongst others for an explanation of the guest worker systems.

In addition, the special case of the welfare state in comparison to a laissez-faire economy is the explanation why even unemployed migrants stay in their host country. As Freeman pointed out "it is the welfare state above else that keeps the migrant abroad in hard times" (Freeman, 1986, p. 57). In the end the benefits of the welfare state overcompensate for all other factors (like language difference, strange and unfamiliar culture), which otherwise would be strong reasons for return migration (or not even leaving the home country). Given this pull force of a welfare state and its indigeneous need to be a closed system, Freeman draws the conclusion that migration is a threat for the welfare state (8).

Finally, we can note that Freeman's approach calls detailed attention for the importance of the benefits of the welfare state as absorption factors and the need for the closed system of the welfare

(8) This statement is underlined by Freeman by two more main issues of his approach. The one is a cost–benefit analysis for migration which in the end at least for family immigration shows that these migration trends cost more than the welfare state benefits from. The second point is that international migration has led to an Americanization of European welfare policies, which mainly refers to the fact that widespread migration has reduced the power of organized labour by dividing it into national and immigrant camps.
state, which in a way refers to the need for immigration regulations. But on the other hand, his approach is rather partial, in that it concentrates mainly on the topic of the welfare state, while neglecting any other behavioral and cultural driving forces.

3.5 The Regulatory Approach

Migration is not just a free movement of people, but is strongly influenced by various physical and non-physical barriers. Zolberg (1981, 1989) has drawn attention to the importance of borders and regulation for migration. His approach aims to deal with the question that migration theories in general ignore the political dimension of migration. According to him it is the political perspective which helps to overcome the limitations of the historical-structural and the economic equilibrium approach.

This political approach should—in this view—be macro-analytical and historical in nature. His framework consists of a world of individuals who maximize their welfare by exercising a variety of choices from which migration is only one. A second element of this world are exclusive societies acting as organized states to maximize collective goals by controlling the exit or entry of individuals. For Zolberg's approach it is very important that the character of international migration is related to a fundamental tension between the interests of individuals and societies and in addition between the sending and receiving countries.

Taking into account the fact that several states interact as parts of a larger whole—a situation which Zolberg calls an international social system—he takes the overall structural configuration of the international social system to provide and approximate an analytical matrix for analyzing migration policies. He illustrates his framework by two topics, labour migration from the Third World and refugee flows from new states.

Concerning the first topic the author studies the conflicting interests of industrial societies to maximize labour supply and to protect cultural integrity. He comes to the conclusion that, wherever economic expansion grinds to a halt, other concerns—like the integrative—get a greater impact on policymaking. The tension of migration may be found in the fact that it is quite evident for the population of less favoured regions to migrate to more desirable countries, but on the other for the more fortunate countries it is rational to preserve their favourable endowment by restricting entry. Only the self interest of the more favourable regions to obtain labour can in the end lead to entry possibilities.

According to Zolberg refugee movements are caused to the need of cultural—and in a way also ideological—homogeneity for building a new nation. Groups which become undesirable in this respect migrate. Because of the cultural homogeneity of other already established nations, Zolberg claims that in the end societal gates can only remain open because of the “bad conscience of an older generation and the expanding ranks of liberal humanists” (Zolberg, 1981, p. 25).

In his more recent paper, Zolberg (1989) notes in the context of restricted entries that it is important to realize that most countries from which people would like to emigrate do not restrict exit, but countries to which people would like to go do so. Finally, it is the policy of potential receivers who determine whether a movement can take place and of what kind. Therefore, Zolberg addresses to Bhagwati’s (1984) opinion that migration can be better influenced by disincentives rather than incentives. Especially in relation to our context of absorption mechanisms, it is important to note that Zolberg points out the important factor that the analysis of absorption factors should not forget to take entry restrictions into account. Looking at the fact that most societies build up a protection wall against self-propended migration, the doors which however allow for specific migration flows to enter a country and the way how these doors are manipulated

(9) Control in Zolberg’s view does not only comprise the erection of more or less restrictive barriers but also incentives or sanctions devised to induce or prevent certain geographic movements.
3.6 The Tension Approach

There are only a few approaches to international migration which try to explain migration in the context of one general, global theory. The approach of Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) is an example of such an attempt, which we may characterize—according to Penninx (1986)—in comparison to other more inductionistic-oriented attempts a deductionist approach. Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) aims to explain international migration as a specific field of social reality only by means of the general Theory of Societal Systems. His System Theory Approach allows for a discussion of migration on the level of three different system units: the individual, the class and the collective system unit. Characteristic for Hoffmann-Nowotny’s analysis on all levels is that migration is seen as the result of structural and anomic tensions. Structural tensions are seen as the result of a divergence of power and prestige, which are themselves regarded as central theoretical concepts corresponding to the dimensions of societal systems conceptualized via structure and culture. Anomic tension is seen as the empirical consequence occurring at the moment when structural tensions exceed a certain threshold level, which is not further specified (10).

Imbedded in this theoretical context Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) is analyzing migration as a process by which tensions are transformed and transferred.

More specifically on the individual level, Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) distinguishes two cases in which migration occurs. The first case is that an individual may have a more or less balanced status configuration within a societal system, but may experience anomic tension because he or she is a member of a power system. The individual is reducing the power deficit by migrating. As a second case Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) addresses the situation that an individual experiences an anomic tension which cannot be traced back to the external position of the system, but to the internal status quo. The individual is migrating for an improvement of his or her status. But in the opinion of Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) these two cases on the individual level are more an exception. As a more frequent case, he considers migration as an exchange between social systems, which means that he refers to the societal level. In this case migration is seen as “a means of a tension management policy” (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1981, p. 71). A policy of migration is seen as one possibility of realizing a balance between power and prestige, which is less difficult than other possibilities that require financial expenses and also touch on the status quo. Migration on the other side is related to a conservation of the structures of the social system of origin.

In addition to the above considerations, Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) stresses that a complete migration analysis should also correspond to the global or world society a given societal system belongs to.

Besides the distinction between the individual and the societal level, Hoffmann-Nowotny (1981) distinguishes between emigration and immigration. According to him emigration can be interpreted as a reduction of tension on the level of a societal system in the same way as it does on the level of the individual system unit. But it is however important to note that this reduction only can be realized if the individuals succeed in balancing their status configuration in the immigration system. Analogously, immigration can be interpreted as the building of tension, because of internal rank distances which may be increased by immigrants. Thus on the one hand, systems with lower tension absorb immigrants who try to reduce tension by migrating, but on the other hand immigration creates new tensions which can be turned partly into a new development. Such a development however is not necessarily a positive one. The shift in the indigenous lower stratum from a low

(10) Anomic tension is seen as a form of adaption attempting to balance power and prestige without solving the structural tension.
perceived to a higher perceived status is an example that it can also prove negative for the development system, viz. the so called immigration system.

In light of the above observations we conclude that Hoffmann-Nowotny’s attempt is quite remarkable because of his attempt to explain migration in the context of a global theory. On the other hand—as the above description shows—his approach is rather abstract (11). In addition, Hoffmann-Nowotny himself pointed out that an application of his “theory is restricted mainly to modern mass migration from less to more developed contexts” (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1981, p. 83).

3.7 The System Approach

The approach which has been discussed most in the most recent past and has increasingly gained attention is the system approach. This approach tends to follow from the recognition that to capture the changing trends and patterns of contemporary international migration (see Section 2) requires a dynamic-instead of a static-perspective. Besides this emphasis on dynamics, a further main characteristic of the system approach is that a so-called migration system is used as the basic system of analysis (Kulu-Glasgow, 1992). A migration system is defined as two or more places or more specific countries connected to each other by flows and counterflows of people.

Figure 3.1 presents a scheme of a system approach to international migration by Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) indicating that besides flows of people also other flows link countries together in a system. Such flows occur within national contexts whose political, demographic, economic and social dimensions are changing partly in response to the feedbacks and adjustments that stem from

![System Framework of International Migration](image)

Source: Kritz and Zlotnik (1992, p. 3)

Fig. 3.1 A system framework of international migration.

(11) This abstract character is a critical point although his theory is empirically based on studies of migration problems in Switzerland.
the migration flow itself. In general, receiving countries are characterized by higher wages and better welfare, while sending countries with high numbers of emigrants have as-Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) note-usually lower wages and poorer conditions. If international migration is analyzed as embedded in a system like the one described in Figure 3.1 it is evident that micro- and macroelements are both involved in the analyses. The role which the individual has in this system is the role of an active decision-maker, who develops strategies to migrate which are embedded in the different influences of the system.

Asking for the key dimensions and processes that need to be considered in studying international migration, Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) point out that—addition to the spatial dimension that demarcates all countries in a system—a time dimension should be included. They note that this additional dimension allows a historical perspective on migration, an analysis of structural conditions, and economic and political linkages. Especially interesting for our broader context is the special emphasis of Kritz and Zlotnik on the role of networks in the migration process. The authors point out that networks (12) of both institutions and individuals link the various countries together into a coherent migration system and could therefore be seen as one of the main factors influencing migration. In our context of critical success factors for absorption they ask how networks at origin restrain or encourage an individual to migrate depending on the extent to which they provide economic and social support, and especially the question how networks at destination give migrants access to various resources and how networks between origin and destination countries can play a role in channelling information, migrants remittances and norms that integrate

### Table 3.1 Global typology of relevant frameworks of international migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Level of analysis</th>
<th>Type of migration analyzed</th>
<th>Critical success absorption factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equilibrium approach</td>
<td>Micro-level</td>
<td>labour migration</td>
<td>employment opportunities, with higher returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical-structural</td>
<td>Macro-level</td>
<td>labour migration</td>
<td>structural factors (socioeconomic and political developments of capitalist economies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility maximizing</td>
<td>Micro-level</td>
<td>labour migration</td>
<td>higher income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare state</td>
<td>Macro-level</td>
<td>labour migration</td>
<td>benefits of the welfare state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory approach</td>
<td>Macro-level</td>
<td>labour migration and refugees</td>
<td>immigration regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension approach</td>
<td>Micro- and Macro-level</td>
<td>labour migration</td>
<td>lower tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System approach</td>
<td>Micro- and Macro-level</td>
<td>all types of migrants</td>
<td>different factors (e.g., social networks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(12) Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) stress the point that networks should also be seen as dynamic sets, thus "networks need to be looked at as dynamic relationships and variable social arrangements that vary across ethnic groups and time and shape migration and its sequels" (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992, p. 6).
migration. Different types of migrants refer to different types of networks: migration of élites for example is facilitated by élite institutional networks (like multinational corporations). Networks of legal and extralegal institutions can be conceptualized extending from the macro- to the micro-level, while migrant networks operate in the reverse direction. To concentrate on the role of networks—in addition to the above described attempts—is also of importance because the networks are the ones which sustain the momentum of migration flows, even though economic incentives to migrate are reduced in different parts and migration controls are tightened by the country of origin.

Finally, we conclude that a system framework has—compared to the other approaches—the big advantage that it tries take into account the variety of factors which play a role in the migration process. This approach is not restricted to a special type of migration and it does not only explain the existence of migration but also their size and composition over time. The special emphasis on networks—and especially on social networks—has a far greater importance if we recognize the fact that nowadays a majority of migration flows may be characterized as family migration. But on the other hand, also the system approach like most of above approaches has a framework character, which in the end does not allow to specify functional relationships or to offer directly testable hypotheses in empirical research.

As a conclusion of this chapter, we summarize in Table 3.1 for all above described approaches their level of analysis, the type of migration analyzed and their critical success absorption factors. As we already mentioned in the context of the review of individual approaches, the question of critical success absorption factors is not analyzed in a very detailed manner.

In the following section a more detailed analysis of critical success absorption factors will be given, based on a more general oriented theoretical framework.

4. Critical Success Absorption Factors in International Migration: an Exploration

4.1 Introduction

Concentrating in the present section on critical success absorption factors, we interpret them as dominant factors, which not only lead to the decision of individuals or groups to migrate to a specific country of destination, but are also of great importance in getting settled in a foreign country. Considering the conditions for migration, summarized by Penninx (1993) under the two broader groups of necessary and sufficient conditions to migrate, we conclude that the analytical frameworks briefly discussed above mainly refer to necessary conditions to migrate, such as economic reasons, reduction of tension etc.. However, absorption factors refer generally to country-specific locational conditions in countries of destination (e.g., social support frameworks, informal networks) and hence belong to sufficient conditions to migrate. Taking this into account, the question to be dealt with in this section is: given the necessary conditions to migrate, which attraction forces play a role in choosing a specific country of destination?

At the outset it should be noted that it is not always possible to make a proper distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions to migrate. As an example we may refer here to the simple case that, when a relative petitions for a teenager's admission to France, the teenager may have a choice between going to the place where the relative lives or not going at all (a similar example is given by Fawcett and Arnold, 1987). This example indicates in addition that the question of critical success absorption factors is also very much related to different types of migration.

It was already suggested at the end of Section 3 that the scientific knowledge on critical success absorption factors is so far not very much developed, in most cases various aspects of critical success absorption factors in migration are analyzed as only one element next to many others, while especially empirical studies are not abundant in number. Instead of others, we want to mention the empirical study of Engelbrektsson (1982) and the one of Boisvert (1987), which especially focus on the role of social networks in the migration process of Turkish migrants to Sweden in the study of
Engelbektsson (1982) and in the case of Boisvert (1987) from Portuguese migrants to France. A structural analysis of critical success absorption factors however is also not undertaken by the two authors. Hence, it may be interesting to discuss in some more detail critical success absorption factors in this section. Rather than giving an exhaustive survey, we will only offer a few explorations which might serve to generate interesting hypotheses which might be tested in follow-up research.

4.2 Categorization of Critical Success Absorption Factors: an Example

For a meaningful classification of critical success absorption factors we refer here to an article by Fawcett and Arnold (1987). In their approach—which belongs to the broader group of system approaches—they present a migration system operating in a set of structural and contextual factors. The authors point out three different groups of such structural and contextual factors, namely (1) **state to state relations and comparisons**, (2) **mass culture connections** and (3) **family and social networks**. These structural and contextual factors may according to Fawcett and Arnold (1987) explain the diversity of Asian and Pacific immigrants to the United States, a situation which may be interpreted from the viewpoint of critical success factors for migration absorption in the European context. These three broad classes of contextual factors will now briefly be discussed.

1. **State to state relations and comparisons**

Since in general economic aspects play a major role in explaining migration, it seems plausible to look first at a higher level of economic development as an indicator related to "state to state relation and comparison". The characterization of this factor as a critical success absorption factor is underlined by the observation that all major receiving countries have highly developed capitalistic economies and at least the image of an open economic system. As Fawcett and Arnold (1987) point out, the difference in economic development between origin and destination may be even more pertinent than the structure of the economic system.

Not mentioned by Fawcett and Arnold (1987) but of great importance from the angle of the welfare state approach is another critical success absorption factor, viz. a higher level of the development of the welfare state (e.g., a highly developed social security system in one country may attract migrants from a country with a less developed system). In the context of European migration this factor may play a role in migration from East to West and to some degree also from South to North.

The choice of migrants in favour of a specific country may next also be the result of economic dependency or dominance of the country of origin on the country of destination.

Another factor in the European context may be the existence of economic and technical assistance programs in the country of destination, as it is well known that Western European states offer economical, financial, and technical assistance to members of Eastern European countries as well as to those from developing countries. Such migrants are—even though their migration streams do not play an important role in a quantitative sense—very often the bridgeheads for further migration flows.

**Political dependency and dominance**—as a result of former colonial linkages between some West European States and South-American, African and Asian countries—may be seen as another critical success absorption factor. Especially in the case of refugees it is noteworthy that they were often attracted by stable democratic systems with more guarantees for social rights, so that essentially the difference in the internal political system between the country of destination and origin plays an important role. Given the politically unstable situations in the majority of the East European countries, it seems plausible to state that the political situation in West-European countries will—at least in the near future—be an important absorption factor. Finally, as mentioned already in the discussion of the regulatory approach, a very important factor in the first group of critical success absorption factors is **immigration policies**. Because of the growing importance of
the role of policies concerning international migration in Europe, we will discuss this factor in a separate subsection (see Section 4.3).

(2) Mass culture connections

The second group of critical success absorption factors refers in particular to cultural similarities and value systems of the country of origin and destination. The above described European migration patterns—especially the migration between hinterlands and homelands (see Section 2)—are at least to some extent the result of this fact.

Similar to this first factor is cultural dependency or dominance—the so called ‘Westernization’, especially in non-European states—as a component of the second group of absorption factors.

The media diffusion of cultural life style in television, radio, and press in the country of destination plays mainly a role as an information source available in the country of origin. With the ever increasing importance of the mass media (especially in the developing world), the importance of information transferred by these media as an absorption factor, is also increasing.

The existence of a common language, common religion, compatible religious beliefs as well as similarities of the educational systems are further factors attracting and absorbing migrants. However, the latter group of factors illustrates clearly that some factors only play a complementary role next to other factors in the absorption process.

As a last absorption factor face-to-face contacts through international travel should be mentioned, especially in light of the growing international mobility.

(3) Family and social networks

The third group of absorption factors refers to the fact that connections with relatives, friends and former community members in destination countries are also strong elements in prompting a move and facilitating settlement by providing help with jobs and housing. A first factor to be mentioned in this context is the geographic dispersion of relatives and friends, which quite often is characterized as a geographic clustering of relatives and friends in the country of destination.

Besides these connections of relatives and friends it is the connection with members of the home country or community—who are not necessarily relatives or friends—which plays a major role as social networks and consequently as a critical success absorption factor.

As a third factor we point at the historically grown depth and intensity of family and community relationships. In this context, we stress the fact that the duration of migration streams established in the past influences the effects of family and other social connections with the country of destination. Looking at European migration history it is evident that these absorption factors played an important role in the most recent past and will—ceteris paribus policy regulations—play an important role in the future.

Also visiting and communication patterns of family and friends in the country of destination can stimulate new migrants in the country of origin to enter a specific country of destination.

The social and economic status of previous migrants and the frequency and amount of remittances may give potential migrants in the country of origin important signs and information on the possibilities for foreign migrants in a specific country of destination.

Normative household and family structures and normative family obligations and commitments may in a way also be considered as critical success absorption factors. The fact that some cultures place more emphasis on the welfare of members of immediate family (direct kinship), while other cultures stress obligations to virtually all relatives is also important in this context. An interesting difference may then arise, if immigrants accumulate resources in order to expand the inflow of eligible members (leading to an absorption of new migrants) or where resources are accumulated only for the immediate family and therefore do not—at least directly—attract new migrants.

As a conclusion on this last group of absorption factors “family and social networks”, we emphasize here the strategic importance of informal information transfer from the former migrants
in the country of destination given to potential migrants in the country of origin, which leads the latter to prefer a specific country to another country. The importance of these kinds of "personal" information needs to be analyzed in more detail (see for example Brown et al, 1981 for internal migration into Columbus, Ohio).

Empirical studies which try to figure out the role of the above mentioned critical success absorption factors in explaining why specific people migrate to specific countries encounter however, various difficulties, in particular in terms of data availability on a long term basis and at a sufficient level of disaggregation and representativeness (see also Fawcett and Arnold, 1987). An interesting methodological and theoretical question is of course the development of an integrative framework, based e.g. on a rational expectations approach in which (direct and indirect, short- and long-term) costs and benefits are traded-off by all individual migrants (13). Such an individual (or group) utility-based cost-benefit assessment would also have to include transaction and information costs. Transaction costs do not only include the direct cost of migrating (for example, travel costs), but also the costs in a broader context of immigration (for example, adjustment costs in the country of destination may depend on similarity in cultural background).

4.3 Immigration Policies as a Critical Success Absorption Factor

Each European state has its own immigration policy. This diversity leads to some divergences which are mirrored in the absorption of different types of migrants from different countries. However, especially in the current unification process in Europe there are some areas of convergence, which need be considered from the viewpoint of different regulatory systems and policies and consequently different absorption effects. But let us first refer to diverse regulations and/or policies.

Two classes of such diverse regulations or policies in the different European countries affecting absorption may be distinguished. On the one hand, we have such ones referring to the stage of entering a country and on the other hand we have regulations or policies concerning the stage after entering a country, the so called stage of adaption (see Fawcett and Arnold. 1987 (14).)

Under the first class of policies and regulations related to the stage of entering a country we may subsume issues like the following: regulations and/or policies about entry conditions and political asylum, family immigration, deportation and categories of immigrants protected from deportation. For example, regulations on family immigration stress the question, whether immigration is allowed (or admission procedures are necessary) for spouses and children and which conditions have to be fulfilled in addition (see Costa–Lascoux, 1990). For a more detailed comparison of the above mentioned regulations and/or various policies between France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands we refer to Costa–Lascoux (1990) or for a comparison between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and the Netherlands to Just and Groth (1985).

As an example of the second group of regulations concerned with the stage of adaption, the following issues may be mentioned: Political rights for foreigners in comparison to nationals, the possibilities for foreigners to get a working or residence permit, the possibilities to participate in the social security system of a country and general adjustment policies for immigrants. In order to illustrate the latter—general adjustment policies—the example of the Netherlands, where positive discrimination and the emancipation of minorities is advocated, may be mentioned in contrast to the example of Germany, which develops vocational education, social aid and the idea

(13) As a theoretical base to start, one may think of the theoretical framework of the Harris-Todaro modal transferred to the context of international migration instead of internal migration between urban and rural regions (Todaro, 1976).

(14) Fawcett and Arnold (1987) distinguish between three different stages: the decision stage, transition stage and adaption stage. The above mentioned stage of entering a country refers mainly to Fawcett and Arnold's transition stage.
of participation in local life (Costa-Lacoux, 1990). Integration policies in France seeks active participation in the national community in part by encouraging naturalization and not by recognizing ethnic communities (Coleman, 1993).

A comparison, for instance, between France and Germany with respect to political rights of foreigners in comparison to nationals shows, that in France only French nationals are entitled to vote and be elected (with the additional regulation that immigrants can be elected by their compatriots as delegates to some municipal councils). In Germany, in principle the same regulation can be observed, with the exception that foreigners have voting rights at communal elections in some municipalities (Costa-Lascoux, 1990).

The effect of different nationality rights in Europe may very well be illustrated by means of the example of Great Britain. In 1983, three different categories of citizenship with British nationality have been created: the British citizenship (which applies to persons born in the United Kingdom itself), the British citizenship of the dependent territories (which applies to persons born in one of the dependent territories) and the British overseas citizenship (which apply to nationals of former British colonies). Only British citizens can reside in the UK and have the right to free circulation and residence in the UK. Also the examples of ethnic Germans shows absorption dependent on the rights resulting from different definitions or a “foreign” immigrant or a “national” immigrant (Costa-Lascoux, 1990).

Beside these divergences, some remarks on the convergence emerging in European states have to be added as well. For these considerations we refer to Velling (1993), van de Kaa (1993) and Meijers (1991). Mainly because of increasing flows of immigrants into Europe and the related problems (such as racial trends in the countries of destination, integration problems etc.), in all Western European countries entry conditions for non-Europeans are becoming more restrictive. For EC-Europeans on the other hand migration between the member countries of the EC becomes much easier with the unification of Europe.

Until now migration between EC countries is jointly regulated by the order 90/364/EWG, which restricts the right to stay in a given EC-country only for people who cannot afford their own living costs. In addition people who stay more than three months in a country need an allowance. With the agreement for the European Economic Area however, the freedom of movement between the EC countries is extended to the EFTA countries (15). In addition, also migration between Scandinavian countries is to be characterized by freedom of movement. Concerning migration from outside the EC, general trends towards a coordinated immigration policy may be observed as well, even though it is not yet entirely clear on which level (for example, the European or national level) this coordination should be effectuated. Besides, some bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements between countries concerning a coordinated immigration policy do exist. One of these agreements (16) is the Schengen Agreement (1990) signed by Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The main purpose of this agreement is a gradual abolition of migration controls at the common (internal) borders and free circulation of citizens of countries which are a party in the agreement, although the competence of migration authorities at the supra-national level will increase. A comprehensive Schengen information system will be developed in order to be able to control the external borders effectively. Introduction of a uniform visa and specification of criteria under which an alien can be given permission to enter the joint territory is also laid down in the Schengen Agreement (17).

In conclusion regulatory systems will play an increasingly important role in international migration in Europe. Such systems will have a dual function: to encourage economic efficiency

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(15) Switzerland however did not sign this agreement.
(16) Two more agreements in this respect, the Dublin Agreement and the Maastricht Treaty, might be mentioned here.
(17) For a detailed analysis of the content of the Schengen Agreement, see Meijers (1991).
through free movement of people in the EC (and associated) countries and to discourage aliens (non-EC members) to enter the EC territory by introducing more strict regulations and absorption mechanisms. Consequently, future international migration flows in Europe will be determined by two main factors: socio-economic disparities, both inside the EC countries and between the EC countries and the rest of the world, and migration regulations.

5. International Migration and Absorption Mechanism: an Integrated View

The above record of views, theories and facts on international migration and the subsequent absorption issues in the receiving countries shows a broad spectrum of approaches. In principle, two stages can be distinguished, viz. the decision to migrate and the decision where to move.

The migration decision encompasses various phases, for instance, disutility of place of origin, willingness to migrate, and final decision to migrate. Social science research has suggested various explanatory frameworks for the decision to leave a country of origin, ranging, from neoclassical economic theory to socio-political theory. In general, it turns out that the migration decision may be adequately described by means of the stress threshold value theory (Wolpert, 1966; Brown and Moore, 1970). Dissatisfaction ('stress') with the place or country of origin will provoke an attitude towards exploration of better opportunities elsewhere; if the dissatisfaction exceeds a critical threshold value, the actual decision to move will be made.

The question however, where to move is more complicated. In general, one may claim that each migrant—after the decision to migrate—will look for a new country or place and will maximize his socio-economic and cultural opportunities. These opportunities have a clear geographical component, as the decision where to go is essentially a choice—and ultimately a competition—for alternative spaces. Each area of destination offers more or less favourable opportunities, which are related to two types of space:

— activity space (cf. Priemus, 1984): the space encompassing the labour market (e.g., employment and wage opportunities) and the housing market (including asset formation)

— contact space (cf. Preston, 1984): the space including amenities and services (e.g., health care, schools) and socio-cultural bonds (providing indirect ties to the place and culture of origin).

The main issue in choosing the new place of country of destination is that there is not an unlimited pool of free places to choose; there is competition among places, there is competition with other migrants entering the same place, and there is competition with the existing population in a given place (causing the above absorption issues). To a large extent one may conjecture that the opportunity space of migrants may be enhanced or reduced by the existing population. Thus there is both complementarity and competition for both the activity space and the contact space. This can briefly be summarized in the following Table 5.1.

The above observations suggest very clearly that migration absorption phenomena are just a specific case or a more general class of phenomena, which is well-known from the theory of ecological competition, where different species compete with one another (or support each other) regarding the same resource or space (see Nijkamp and Reggiani, 1993). In this framework,
especially the predator-prey model appears to offer an integrative paradigm for analyzing the dynamics of inter-group competition, interaction and interdependence. Therefore, it seems to be a potentially fruitful research task to analyze absorption issues of foreign migrants by using the wealth of knowledge from ecological competition theory. Policy issues can also easily be included in such modelling efforts, as—apart from prohibitive regulations—most policy instruments (both of an encouraging and a discouraging nature) impact on the parameters of the opportunity space. Absorption policy questions should therefore focus in particular on influencing the determinants of the opportunity space of migrants. Thus, in conclusion, the blend of the stress threshold value model and the ecological competition model will most likely offer interesting and promising new research departures for investigating migration absorption mechanisms.

References


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