

# Applying Migration Theories

## Activity #2

## Teacher Instructions

### 1. Overview & Learning Objectives

**Estimated Time:** 120 minutes (45 min group work, 75 min presentation/discussion).

**Context:** This assignment uses fictitious, yet realistic, case studies to help students understand the underlying forces that drive migration and how different sociological and economic theories explain these movements. Students must analyze a case without being told the correct theoretical link.

**Format:** Group work (pairs or groups of 3-4 students). Each group is assigned **one** specific case study.

**Learning Objectives (LOs):** Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Apply key migration theories (e.g.: Neoclassical, Network, NELM, Dual Labor Market, World Systems) to specific migration scenarios.
- Critically analyze the push and pull factors within a given case.
- Identify policy gaps and develop targeted, evidence-based policy recommendations.

### 2. Materials and Preparation

- **Required Materials:** Handout of the assigned case study and the seminar questions (provided below).
- **Setup:** Print or digitally assign one case study to each group. Ensure students have access to foundational readings on migration theories prior to the seminar.
- **Teacher Note on Theories:** The “Theoretical Link” provided under each case is **for the teacher's reference only** and must **NOT** be shared with the students until *after* the discussion. The discussion should be guided to allow students to debate which theory offers the *best* explanation.

### 3. Case Studies for Allocation

This table includes the full description, theme, and theoretical link for easy reference and case allocation.

Case	Theme	Case Description (Teacher Key)	Theoretical Link (Teacher Key)
<b>I: María</b>	Economic Migration (NELM)	<b>María, 24, from Oaxaca, Mexico.</b> Family crops failed due to drought; high need for income for siblings' education and grandparents' care. Migrates to California for agricultural work (\$12/hour—triple local pay). Sends 40% of earnings as remittances and pools savings with cousins to start a small business.	Household decision-making, remittances as insurance, and income diversification align with <b>New Economics of Labor Migration Theory</b> but also <b>Network Theory</b> .
<b>II: Ahmed</b>	Forced Migration (Asylum)	<b>Ahmed, 22, Syrian engineering student.</b> University bombed, father detained by regime forces. Pays smugglers to reach Greece, then leverages English skills for provisional residency as an IT apprentice in Berlin. Navigates complex asylum process and desires to contribute to new community.	Wage differentials (Syria vs. Germany) and individual utility maximization, rational choice reflect <b>Neoclassical Economic Theory</b> (explains why he went to Germany and not stayed in Greece).
<b>III: The Rahmans</b>	Environmental Migration	<b>The Rahman family, affluent shrimp farmers in Bangladesh.</b> Livelihood destroyed by climate change (cyclones, saltwater intrusion). Mr. Rahman uses his aquaculture expertise to apply for an <b>EU Blue Card</b> and they relocate to Rotterdam. Mrs. Rahman faces credential recognition issues; family relies on community support for integration.	Displacement driven by global capitalist expansion ties to <b>World Systems Theory</b> .

<b>IV: Juan</b>	Family Reunification	<b>Juan, Salvadoran construction worker in Los Angeles.</b> Left family years ago, gained legal status, spent \$8,000 in legal fees over six years to sponsor his wife Elena and children. Family relies on church pro bono legal aid during ICE raids and cousins in Maryland for healthcare enrollment advice; daughter benefits from bilingual education.	Chain migration and social capital utilization exemplify <b>Network Theory</b> (but also <b>NELM</b> initially).
<b>V: Amina</b>	Economic Migration (Exploitation)	<b>Amina, skilled Nigerian nurse.</b> Recruited to Birmingham, UK, through an NHS program targeting Commonwealth countries. Placed in geriatric care (a sector often shunned by British nurses) earning 23% below the median for native nurses. Funds siblings' education, but job involves understaffed night shifts, questioning if her migration merely shifted her into a different form of labor exploitation.	Structural demand for migrant labor in undesirable sectors aligns with <b>Labor Market Segmentation Theory</b> .
<b>VI: Miguel</b>	Seasonal Migration	<b>Miguel, K'iche' Maya farmer from Guatemala's Highlands.</b> Annually migrates temporarily to Oregon's pear orchards on H-2A visas, earning \$18/hour (10x his home income). Pays \$200/month for shared housing and risks pesticide exposure. Uses earnings to fund drip-irrigation back home but faces potential	Employers' reliance on disposable migrant labor reflects <b>Dual Labor Market Theory / World Systems Theory</b> .

		undocumented status due to tightening visa quotas.	
<b>VII: Priya</b>	High Skilled Migration	<b>Priya, Indian AI engineer.</b> Left Bangalore for a Silicon Valley startup for a \$250,000 salary (triple her home earnings) to maximize career growth. Employer secured STEM OPT visa; LinkedIn connections helped her spouse secure a job. She is actively mentoring Indian students in AI.	Individual wage optimization and human capital investment mirror <b>Neoclassical Economic Theory</b> , maybe <b>NETWORK</b> (LinkedIn connections).
<b>VIII: Jamal</b>	Economic Migration (Network)	<b>Jamal, young man from Morocco.</b> Decides to migrate to France to join his older brother in Paris, who established a stable life there. Relies on his brother's guidance and connections to navigate housing, employment, and essential services upon arrival.	Migration driven and sustained primarily by social connections and familial support exemplifies <b>Network Theory</b> .

## 4. Activity Flow and Discussion Guidance

1. **Case Allocation (5 min):** Assign one case to each group.
2. **Group Analysis (40-45 min):** Groups read their case, discuss the questions, and prepare notes/an outline for a short presentation.
3. **Group Presentation (40-60 min):** Each group presents their analysis (5-7 minutes per case).
  - o **Crucial Step:** When discussing Question 2 (Migration Theory), challenge groups who cite only one theory. Ask: *Can this be explained by other theories as well? Why is your chosen theory the strongest fit?*
4. **Policy Discussion (15-20 min):** Focus on Question 4. Encourage students to critique the feasibility of their recommendations and identify potential unintended consequences.
5. **Conclusion:** Reveal the theoretical links (Teacher Key) and discuss why migration is rarely explained by a single theory (the concept of **cumulative causation**).

# Applying Migration Theories

## Activity #2

### Student Materials

**Submission Type:** Group presentation and discussion.

#### Part 1: Case Study Analysis

Your group has been assigned one case study. **Thoroughly review the case study, paying close attention to the background, circumstances, push/pull factors, and needs of the migrant(s) involved.**

#### Part 2: Group Questions for Presentation

Use the assigned case study to prepare detailed answers to the following four questions. Your group must be ready to present and defend your answers to the class.

**1. Migrant Category:** What **migrant category (or categories)** does your case study address (e.g.: economic migrant, asylum seeker, refugee, environmental migrant, high-skilled migrant, family reunification)? Justify your choice with specific details from the case.

**2. Theoretical Explanation:** In your analysis, which **migration theory** best explains the migration drivers in your case study? (e.g.: Neoclassical Economic Theory, New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM), World Systems Theory, Network Theory, Dual Labor Market Theory, Labor Market Segmentation Theory). Explain *why* you chose this theory, pointing to specific evidence in the case (e.g.: wage differentials, family decision-making, global ties, social capital).

**3. Challenges and Gaps:** Identify the key **challenges, barriers, and gaps in services or support** that the migrant(s) face in the destination country. These could be legal, economic, social, or cultural.

**4. Policy Recommendations:** Develop **two policy recommendations** tailored to address the specific needs of the migrants in your assigned case.

- Your recommendations must be **realistic, feasible, and evidence-based**, considering the political, economic, and social context of the destination country.
- Propose specific actions, strategies, and interventions that government agencies, NGOs, or other stakeholders could implement to support the migrants and improve their integration outcomes.



Developed by the ACRONYM project team under the academic leadership of Clarissa Tabosa, PhD. as part of the project's educational and capacity-building activities. This project has received funding from the HORIZON Europe programme under the Grant Agreement number 101079420.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

