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Macro-economic determinants of international migration in Europe

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background¹

Three specific phenomena largely affected international migration patterns in Europe in the second half of the 20th century. Labour shortages in Northern and Western Europe, European decolonisation, and the rise and subsequent collapse of the communist bloc in Central and Eastern Europe all had significant impacts.

Most Northern and Western European countries had to recover from the ravages of the Second World War and experienced unprecedented economic growth from the 1950s to the economic recession of 1973/1974. Post-war reconstruction and rapid economic growth led to a high demand for manual labour in these countries, a demand which could not be met by the domestic labour force.

Another important development after the Second World War was Europe's retreat from its position as world leader. Withdrawal from European colonies often created a vacuum, leaving armed guerrilla wars in its wake. Most anti-colonial movements were finally successful and from the early 1980s onwards only a few small European dependencies have remained.

The end of the Second World War saw Soviet Union occupation of large parts of Central and Eastern Europe. Soviet predominance in the rest of Eastern Europe was recognised by the West in 1945. Although this predominance was meant to be temporary, a communist bloc vis-à-vis the West was formed. Opposition parties were suppressed and by 1948 the Soviet bloc was fully in place. The east-west divide came to an end in 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell. The demolition of this symbol of the Cold War and the division between East and West may be treated as a precursor of the collapse of communism in Europe. From 1989 onwards, a period of transition started. As a consequence of the downfall of the communist system, several countries, which did not exist in the previous period, were formed (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia-Montenegro, Macedonia, Slovenia, the Czech and Slovak republics and (a united) Germany), and others (the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and East and West Germany) had ceased to exist.

International migration in post-war Europe was highly influenced by these historical developments. Although observed migration patterns in Europe in this period seem to show endless diversity, a number of common causes and motives can be distinguished.

¹ This section is based on chapter 1 of a NIDI working paper (Jennissen *et al.*, 2001).

Since the aftermath of the Second World War, in non-communist Europe three large overlapping waves of migration could be identified (White, 1993): labour migration (to solve the shortage of labour in Western and Northern Europe), family migration (for family reunification and formation) and post-industrial mobility (involving high-skilled labour, clandestine and asylum migration). In addition to these three migration waves, postcolonial migration flows have to be taken into account. Again, three different waves could be distinguished (Van de Kaa, 1996a). The first consisted of returning settlers, public servants and military personnel, migration flows of natives of the former colonies comprised the second, and the third was chain migration.

International migration has been a very important component of Western European population dynamics. Computed net migration figures of the Council of Europe (2000) reveal that the countries without a communist past experienced a non-natural population growth of 17.8 million persons in the period 1960-1999². This was about 28% of the total population growth. This share increases to about 60% if we take only the last 15 years into account. In general, we may state that the share of non-natural population growth grew in the second half of the twentieth century because of increasing migration and declining fertility. International migration between the individual Western European countries is, of course, not taken into account in these calculations. The share of migration in the total population growth, then, is relatively higher in the countries which took in many European migrants. In West Germany, Europe's largest migrant magnet, the share of non-natural growth was as high as 85% in the period 1960-1999³. Not only did net immigration (i.e. immigration > emigration) have a large impact on population growth in Western Europe, but net emigration (when immigration < emigration) also had an important impact on the size of the population in some traditional European emigration countries. Especially Portugal lost many of its inhabitants to emigration in the second half of the twentieth century. The country experienced net emigration of about 1.25 million in the period 1960-1999.

In communist Europe, on the other hand, international migration figures were traditionally low. In spite of those low figures, international labour migration also existed in communist Europe⁴, although it reached nowhere near the level of the non-communist countries. The most predominant type of migration in the communist era was long-term migration of certain ethnic groups (mostly Germans or Jews) or of political opponents of the communist regime. After 1988, however, migration figures in the former communist countries (the countries in transition) significantly increased (Okólski, 1998a). Given the turbulent

² The used data are not completely accurate (see section 1.6). For Germany only data for West Germany are used, also after the reunification. The data for Spain do not go back further than 1965. Malta was left out of the calculation, as no data were available for the period before 1975.

³ The absolute net immigration figure for this period was 9.9 million.

⁴ Czechoslovakia, for instance, imported labour from Vietnam, Angola, Mongolia and Poland (OECD, 1993 in United Nations, 1998a).

history of Eastern Europe, the potential number of migrants in Eastern Europe was very large (Van de Kaa, 1996a). After the collapse of communism, ethnic minorities in Eastern Europe were able (or forced) to migrate to their country of origin, and as a result ethnic migration has once again become significant.

Most Eastern European countries experienced low net emigration in the period 1960-1988, albeit with some exceptions: East Germany experienced mass emigration before the construction of the Berlin Wall (1961) and many Czechoslovakians left their country in the years around the Prague Spring (1967 and 1968). After 1988, however, the role of international migration in population dynamics significantly increased in the former communist countries. International migration had an enormous impact on population change in the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. The Russian Federation, for instance, had an immigration surplus of about 3.9 million in the period 1991-1999 (Council of Europe, 2000). The overwhelming majority of immigrants who entered Russia in this period were repatriating Russians from other former Soviet republics. The reverse of this Russian immigration surplus is the large non-natural population loss in the non-Slavic former Soviet states.

1.2 Research goal

This dissertation has been written within the framework of the research program ‘Towards a scenario model for socio-economic determinants of population dynamics in Europe’⁵. The aim of this program is to develop a new methodology with which consistent European population scenarios can be formulated. These scenarios are based on the explicit relations between economic and demographic processes in Europe. The goal of such scenario building is to show the demographic consequences of future economic development in Europe and expansion of the European Union. All demographic components (fertility, mortality and migration) are taken into consideration.

It is only recently international migration has been included in population forecasts as a separate factor. This is striking as it is, as we saw in the previous section, an important component of population dynamics in many Western European countries. Figures of the Council of Europe (2000) reveal that net migration has become a more important component of the total population change than natural change in Austria, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland⁶, the UK and West Germany as early as the first half of the 1970s. Van der Erf (1992) gives three reasons why international migration played a subordinate part in demographic projections. First, he states that the limited availability of time series plays an important role.

⁵ This project was financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

⁶ Switzerland also experienced a three-year period in which net migration was larger than the natural growth in the beginning of the 1960s.

He also asserts that the erratic pattern of international migration time series makes projections of this component a risky business. Finally, Van der Erf argues that the sensitivity of international migration both in public opinion and in population policies may cause reservations about the use of international migration in projections.

In addition to being an important component of the total population change, international migration is also important for population forecasts as it can have an impact on the natural population change in both net immigration and net emigration countries. The presence of migrant populations, for instance, often positively influences natural population growth as age-specific and total fertility rates of migrant populations are usually higher than those of the native population.

The absence of the international migration component in many population forecasts does not mean the total neglect of this topic in projection exercises. Statistics Netherlands, for instance, included projections of international migration as part of the population projection since 1950. However, between 1950 and 1980 the migration projection did not form a part of the baseline scenario of the population forecast (Gjaltema and Broekman, 2001). However, by the end of the 1980s the population forecasts of all Northern and Western European countries comprised an international migration component. In contrast, this component was still lacking in many Southern and Eastern European countries at that time (Keilman and Crujisen, 1992).

International migration assumptions underlying population forecasts often lack a sound theoretical background. This dissertation seeks to improve this theoretical background by quantifying the effects of economic indicators on international migration. International migration in turn may also have an impact on economic indicators. These reverse effects will not be treated in the analytical part of this dissertation, but the fact of their existence implies that this research is not truly explanatory. The outcomes of this project will partially determine which economic indicators will be used to produce scenarios and eventually population projections. This implies that only the effects of macro-level indicators on international migration will be estimated.

The goal of this dissertation, then, is to identify and quantify the macro-economic determinants of international migration in Europe and to assess the usefulness of these determinants for migration projections.

Thus, this dissertation deals with the underlying causes of international migration in a European context. A pan-European approach has been chosen⁷. However, this does not mean

⁷ The European countries with less than 200,000 inhabitants (Andorra, Holy See, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino) have not been taken into account. The former Yugoslavian republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia-Montenegro and Albania have not been taken into account in the analyses as these countries do not have enough data. Some people may consider Cyprus and the former Transcaucasian and even

that the old east-west division of Europe has been put aside; it will appear in the analytical part of this dissertation. The research covers the period from the aftermath of the Second World War to the end of the twentieth century (from 1960 to 2000).

1.3 Scientific relevance

Demography has a long tradition of research into the socio-economic determinants of mortality and fertility (Caldwell, 2001). British researchers, for instance, found differences in mortality rates by urban-rural residence as early as in the seventeenth century. Mortality has been the most extensively studied component in the discipline. However, fertility studies predominated in the 1960s and 1970s. Van de Kaa (1996b) presents an overview of the rich history of research into the determinants of fertility in the second half of the twentieth century.

Migration was never the most extensively studied component in (social) demography. Nevertheless, the number of studies on (international) migration is vast. The existing theories of international migration propose different potential predictors of international migration. However, attempts to measure the influence of several indicators, proceeding from competing or coexisting theories, on international migration are rare (Massey *et al.*, 1994, 1998). According to Massey *et al.*, a large share of the literature on international migration in North America is not empirical. Often, studies do not go beyond polemic arguments or theoretical discourses. The studies that are empirical tend to be descriptive studies and are of limited use in testing theories. Massey *et al.* contend that the European literature comprises even less empirical research which is theoretically relevant.

According to Massey *et al.* (1994, 1998), two main reasons are responsible for this sorry state of affairs. Firstly, representative data on international migration are scarce. The extent of this problem is larger in Europe than in North America as contrary to the traditional immigration countries, many European countries have only a recent history of collecting and publishing international migration data. This is probably an important reason why European studies comprise less empirical research which is theoretically relevant. Secondly, research into international migration lacks a commonly accepted theoretical framework, which would facilitate the accumulation of knowledge.

This dissertation is theoretically relevant as hypotheses on possible determinants of international migration which are based on competing and coexisting (economic) theories are tested. Furthermore, the scientific relevance of this dissertation lies in the construction of a theoretical framework of international migration in which the importance of economic factors in solving the international migration puzzle is shown.

the Central Asian Soviet republics as being European. However, this dissertation does not contain descriptive discourses or analyses on these countries.

1.4 Societal relevance

The presence of large migrant populations may give rise to considerable social consequences. Migrants, especially those from non-Western countries, often belong to the lower socio-economic strata of society. In the long term, migrants may form the majority in the city centres of Western Europe. Adverse economic developments may lead to cultural conflicts and ghettoisation under the least favourable circumstances (SCP, 1994). It goes without saying that the culture in receiving countries is influenced by a changing ethnic composition engendered by international migration. Less obvious, however, is that international migration can also influence lifestyles in sending countries. If large outflows occur over a prolonged period, migration may become part of the values of sending societies. As a result, a so-called 'culture of migration' may develop (Massey *et al.*, 1993).

International migration has also an impact on economic life in both receiving and sending countries. For instance, international migrants whose participation in certain branches of industry alleviates inherent labour shortages can contribute to economic growth in receiving countries (Gieseck *et al.*, 1995). International migration can also change lifestyles of populations in receiving countries. Changing lifestyles can have impact on economic developments in receiving countries as they may involve change in saving and consumer habits or forms of investment (Frey and Mammey, 1996; MaCurdy *et al.*, 1998).

The consequences of international migration on both social and economic life in receiving and sending countries should not be underestimated. In view of the significance of international migration in European population dynamics, it is highly relevant to study the factors that determine international migration. Furthermore, this acquired insight may contribute to better migration projections, which in turn may lead to better population projections.

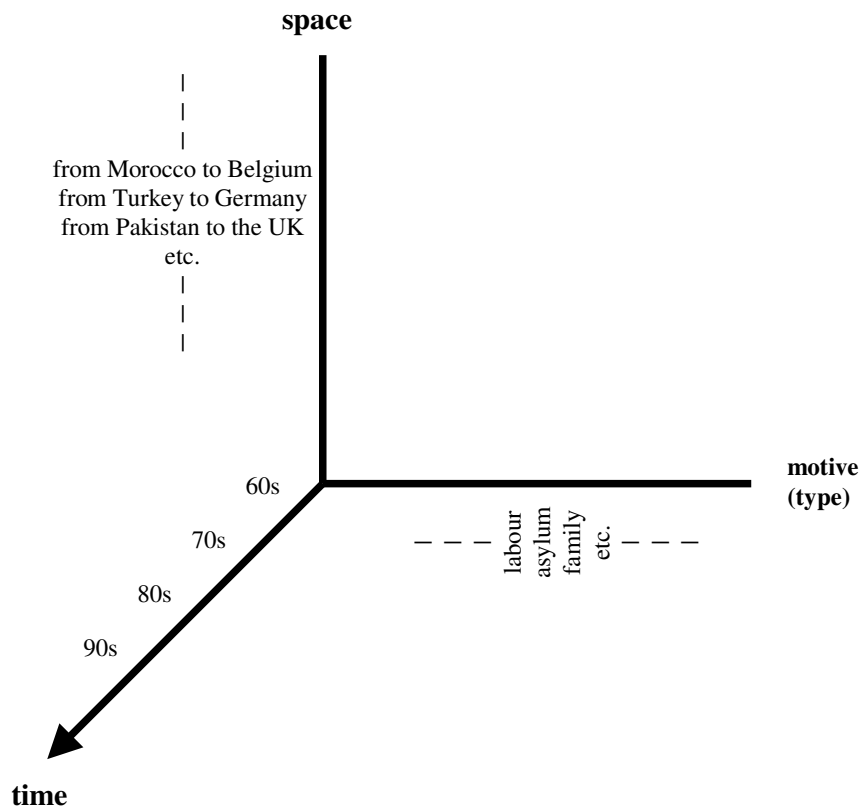
1.5 Determinants of international migration

The determinants of international migration can be divided into political, social, spatial, cultural and economic determinants. The political determinants can be divided into the political situation in sending countries and migration policies in receiving countries. Examples of social determinants are: the attitude of the population towards foreigners; the degree of inequality in a society; or the ethnic composition of the population. In addition to the geographical distance, we may also consider, for instance, frequent or cheap flight connections between countries as spatial determinants. The cultural distance between two countries is small if, for instance, the same language is spoken in both countries. This might stem from a common colonial past. In this dissertation the spatial and cultural determinants are collectively termed 'linkages between countries'.

As mentioned earlier, hypotheses on possible economic determinants of international migration are tested in this dissertation. Two types of macro-economic indicators are often used in research into societal phenomena. The first type comprises labour market indicators. Examples of these indicators are unemployment rates, the labour participation of women or the amount of human capital in a country. The second type of indicators pertains to productivity indicators (e.g. GDP or GNP per capita). Effects of both types of macro-economic indicators will be estimated in this study.

International migration may vary for different migration types, in time, and between different countries. *Figure 1.1* shows these three dimensions (motive, space and time) of international migration. Pooled cross-sectional time series analyses on international migration data will be conducted. This methodology accounts for the space and time dimensions. The effects of economic determinants may vary for different migration types. Therefore, in addition to analyses on net migration and total immigration and emigration, macro-economic determinants of specific migration (sub)types are also estimated.

Figure 1.1. Three dimensions of international migration



Among the different motives that underlie international migration, we may distinguish labour, family, return, ethnic and asylum migration⁸. These migration types in turn can be subdivided. Labour migration, for instance, can be divided into low-skilled and high-skilled labour migration. Family migration can be distinguished according to family reunification and family formation. Family reunification is migration of a family member of a former migrant whose family ties with this former migrant existed before the migration of this former migrant. Family formation is migration for the purpose of marriage or cohabitation (e.g. with a former migrant or his or her children) (Sprangers, 1995). Another migration type, which we may distinguish, is illegal migration. By far most illegal migration pertains to illegal labour migration. The demand for illegal labour, which is determined by the extent of the informal economy, is probably the most important determinant of this migration type. Analyses on illegal migration are not conducted because of the near absence of data on this migration type and its potential determinants. Economic determinants of international migration are mostly associated with labour migration. However, other migration types are also partly determined by economic factors.

The dominant international migration type in Europe in the 1960s and the early 1970s (until the economic recession of 1973/1974) was labour migration. Many Southern European workers migrated to Western Europe (King, 1993; King and Rybaczuk, 1993). Since the 1980s, economic factors play a less important part in explaining migration flows within Europe. For instance, the consequences of opening the international borders within the European Union for intra-European labour migration appeared to be small. At the same time, economic indicators remain important factors behind intercontinental migration flows to Europe and behind migration from the former communist countries in Eastern Europe to EU and EFTA countries. So, although the geographical pattern of migration in Europe has changed, much of the theoretical rationale for migration remains nevertheless unchanged.

The theoretical rationales for the different international migration types are quite complex as the factors which influence migration often also largely influence each other. For instance, the socio-economic situation in a receiving country is often a very important determinant of the migration policy of this particular country. In addition, as we saw in section 1.2, international migration in turn may also have a feedback impact on its presumed determinants.

⁸ We may also distinguish retirement, study and medical migration. Retirement migration has occurred on a relatively small scale. Study and medical migration are mostly of short duration. Therefore, these migration types were not dealt within this dissertation.

1.6 International migration data

Representative data on international migration are scarce. As such, it is difficult to obtain an internationally consistent database. The first obstacle is the lack of agreement on the definition of a migrant. When is someone a migrant? The spatial aspect of international migration is fairly clear: international migration occurs if someone moves from a particular country to another country. The temporal aspect is much less obvious. Not everyone who crosses an international border is an international migrant (United Nations, 1998a). The duration of sojourn of a person in another country could be a useful criterion to distinguish international migrants from other border crossers. However, this is no absolute criterion, as, for instance, some tourists stay longer in a country than some foreign seasonal workers or asylum seekers. Nevertheless, researchers and policymakers mostly use the criterion that someone who intends to stay longer than one year in another country can be considered as an international migrant. In this dissertation no definition of a migrant will be formulated as the data employed are provided by individual countries. These data may contain inconsistencies with respect to the definition of a migrant.

There are many inconsistencies between data of receiving and sending countries concerning the same migration flow (Willekens, 1994; Poulain, 1999). The aforementioned definition problem may play a part here. However, inconsistencies also often exist between two countries which use comparable definitions of migrants. Kupiszewski and Kupiszewska (1999) have formulated two simple rules in the decision to use the data of the receiving or sending country in an analysis or description of international migration flows: only use data of receiving countries, or use data of countries which have reported the highest figures. In most cases both rules lead to the same result, because the migration figure of the receiving country is generally higher as migrants have no reason to report their departure to the authorities of the sending country. The European countries can be divided into countries which obtain migration data by keeping a population register and countries which obtain data by regularly conducting population censuses. This distinction is not a fixed certainty. Countries which keep a population register often conduct surveys to check (and if necessary to update) their population register. On the other hand, countries which conduct censuses often use some registered data on births, deaths and migration to update their population data. The way in which receiving and sending countries obtain their migration data may also partly explain inconsistencies between receiving and sending countries. The immigration data of “register countries” are generally more accurate as the share of legal immigrants who register themselves with the authorities often approximates 100%. The reason behind this is that registration with the authorities is often necessary for migrants to obtain, for instance, a job, a dwelling or health insurance. A disadvantage of census data is that they measure transitions instead of moves. The number of transitions between two censuses is often proportionally distributed over the intermediate years. Hence, the actual year of moving may remain

unknown. It is unclear whether the emigration data of register countries are more accurate than those of census countries.

The aforementioned data problems are small compared to the very basic problem of the unavailability of many (European) migration data. Immigration and emigration data are far from complete. Especially the Eastern and Southern European countries lack much information on total in- and outflows. However, the situation in the transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe has improved remarkably. Quite considerable data are available for the post-communist era. In Western Europe some information on total in- and outflow is missing too. France, for instance, does not have emigration data. The data which are available often do not refer to the period before 1985. The availability of specific migration flows between two countries (by age and sex) is, of course, worse than that of total immigration and emigration. Available data also do not go further back than 1985. Data on specific migration types are even scarcer⁹. The only exception are data on asylum seekers. Data on the number of asylum seekers in Northern and Western Europe in the period 1985-1999 are almost complete. A breakdown by nationality is often also available. Computed net migration figures, which are calculated as population growth minus natural increase, are available for almost all European countries and for a long period. Hence, analyses on computed net migration are an important component of the analytical part of this dissertation. Unfortunately, these figures do not contain information on the underlying immigration and emigration patterns. Low computed net migration figures, for instance, may be the result of a small inflow and outflow as well as the result of a large inflow and outflow. Furthermore, administrative corrections which are not related to international migration may affect these migration figures.

Contrary to most Western European countries, where population is used to compute net migration, Eastern European countries compute population with *registered* net migration figures since the 1990s. Hence, net migration figures for Eastern European countries in the 1990s are registered net migration figures. A problem with these registered net migration figures in Eastern Europe is the considerable under-registration of emigrants. Mašková and Stašová (2000), for instance, estimated that on an annual basis some 4000 - 5000 emigrants yearly are not registered in the Czech Republic in the period 1993-1997.

1.7 Structure of the thesis and research questions

This section presents an overview of the path that will be followed to achieve the goal of this research, which is formulated in section 1.2. *Table 1.1* shows the function and position of each chapter in the dissertation.

⁹ Data on migration types often refer to the channel of entry, which does not necessarily correspond to the real motive for migration.

Chapter 2 serves as an introduction of some specific events that had a considerable impact on international migration (e.g. a drastic migration policy or the independence of colonies). However, the main purpose of this chapter is to identify and classify countries with similar net migration trends over time. This (sub)division of countries, then, constitutes the point of departure for analysis. Furthermore, this information is used to select the case studies from which determinants of specific migration types are estimated in chapter 6.

Chapter 3 is the theoretical basis of this thesis. It shows that the economic point of view accounts for a considerable part of the theoretical background of international migration. In addition, this chapter forms the basis for selecting (economic) determinants to be used in the analytical part of this dissertation.

The aim of chapter 4 is to estimate the influence of economic determinants on net international migration flows in Western Europe in the period 1960-1999 and on total immigration and emigration flows in some Eastern European countries in the period 1991-1999. Data on total immigration and emigration flows are also available for most Western European countries from 1985. Immigration in Western European countries was not analysed because immigration and net migration figures are highly correlated. Consequently, results of the analyses of net migration are transferable to immigration. Given the consistent emigration trends, it did not seem to be a fruitful exercise to analyse emigration.

Economic determinants of net international migration were estimated over a long time scale in chapter 4. These international migration figures are composed of multiple (in and out) migration flows, which comprise nearly always different migration types. As already indicated (section 1.5), socio-economic determinants may exert a different influence on different migration types. Chapter 6 aims to identify differences in the influence of socio-economic determinants on important international migration types (labour, return, family, and ethnic migration) in Europe in the post-industrial era (i.e. the period 1985-1999). Time series regression analyses are conducted on case studies of specific types of migration. However, before conducting an analysis on specific migration types, a detailed description of international migration in Europe in the post-industrial era will be presented in chapter 5.

Chapter 6 does not examine asylum migration, which has become one of the most dominant European migration types. This migration type is the exclusive topic of chapter 7. Asylum migration seems to be largely determined by other factors than economic development. Nevertheless, the choice of a certain country of asylum may be partially determined by economic factors. Therefore, this chapter aims to estimate determinants of the distribution of asylum seekers in Europe. The research in this chapter has been limited to Northern and Western European countries. Eastern European countries have not been included in the analysis as many asylum seekers who apply for asylum in these countries actually intend to travel to Western Europe and do so when they get the opportunity. Southern European countries have not been taken into account, as potential asylum migrants prefer clandestine sojourn in these countries rather than undergo the regular asylum procedure.

In the final chapter the results of this thesis are summarised. An attempt has been made to present a new angle on international migration in Europe. This entails, in addition to new elements, fine tuning and modifying (aspects of) older migration theories. Moreover, this final chapter buttresses the objectives of the research program, within which this dissertation has been written, by providing implications for the construction of migration scenarios.

Table 1.1. Specific research questions

| Chapter | |
|---------|--|
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which specific (political) events had a large impact upon the volume of international migration in Europe? - Is it possible to classify countries with similar net migration trends and if so which classifications can be established? |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can economic determinants improve the theoretical underpinning of hypotheses concerning international migration? - Which socio-economic factors have an impact upon international migration? |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the influence of socio-economic factors on net international migration in Western Europe in the period 1960-1998? - What is the influence of socio-economic factors on international immigration and emigration to and from Eastern European countries in the post-communist era? |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the role of specific migration types in the different parts of Europe in the post-industrial era (since 1985)? |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the influence of socio-economic factors on labour, return, family, and ethnic migration flows in Europe in the post-industrial era? |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the influence of socio-economic factors on the distribution of asylum seekers over Northern and Western European countries? |