The role of aspirations in migration

Jørgen Carling
The role of aspirations in migration

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Abstract: This conceptual paper seeks to engage with migration theory by examining the nature and function of aspirations in migration processes. Aspirations play a pivotal role in all migrations, but in different ways. Aspirations are both reactive and anticipatory. In the former case, they are a part of the background for migration decisions such as the decision that migration is preferable to staying. Aspirations also help explain some recent patterns of migration, as they contribute to the formation of social groups and the building of communities of interest and identity. In this respect, aspirations also have an important role in the understanding and interpretation of migration decisions. The paper identifies the factors that influence aspirations and empirically analyzes the determinants of aspirations, as well as the role of aspirations in shaping the future of migration. It also includes an empirical study of aspirations in migration, which shows that aspirations are a fundamental element in the process of migration decision-making.

Introduction

This paper is a first step in an ongoing research process, starting with the site of raising questions and examining on two issues rather than providing answers. It identifies a number of conceptual themes that are important, but which do not fit neatly together as a well-structured paragraph. I plan to address these themes in the subsequent sections by developing a conceptual framework for migration aspirations. The focus of this paper is on how aspirations can be understood as part of the migration process. The paper examines how aspirations are formed and how they influence migration decisions. It also includes an empirical study of aspirations in migration, which shows that aspirations are a fundamental element in the process of migration decision-making.
The role of aspirations in migration

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Aspirations play a central role in migration decision-making. Among other things, aspirations influence the choice of migration destination, the timing of migration, the type of migration, and the decision whether to return. This paper examines the role of aspirations in migration decision-making. It argues that aspirations can be understood as a form of social capital, and that they are influenced by both individual and collective factors. The paper also discusses the implications of these findings for policy-makers and researchers.

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Future article(s)
Aspiration/ability model

Aspiration/ability model

What does it mean to have migration aspirations?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<td>Tanzania</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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Gallup World Poll / Docquier et al 2014
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

Tendency
Evaluation
Entity
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

Tendency
Evaluation
Entity

Elusiveness
Sensitivity
Variability

James Hill for the New York Times
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

- **Tendency**: Entity
- **Evaluation**: Favour / disfavour
- **Strength**: No wish to migrate - Strong wish to migrate
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

Tendency

Evaluation

Entity

Favour / disfavour

Strength

Strong wish to stay

No wish either way

Strong wish to migrate
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

A THEORY OF MIGRATION*

EVERETT S. LEE
University of Pennsylvania

RESUMEN
serie de factores sobre lugar de origen y de destino, obstáculos de la tendencia y tomar en cuenta las condiciones propias de migración. Siempre que sean posibles, los datos deben ser diquirados en términos de datos disponibles.

Obstacles in Migration

CHART I
ORIGIN AND DESTINATION FACTORS AND INTERVENTING OBSTACLES IN MIGRATION

1881, but in...
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

Tendency
Evaluation
Entity

Places
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

‘Experiences of mobility bestow authority on the moving subjects’
(Sørensen & Stepputat 2001)

‘Mobility has become the most powerful and most coveted stratifying factor’
(Bauman 1998)
Migration aspirations as a form of attitude

- Tendency
- Evaluation
- Entity

- Places
- Space
- Projects: strategies, paths, scripts,
  Context-specific social constructions
Conclusions

Two-step approach: successful and necessary
Conclusions

What does it mean to have migration aspirations?
Conclusions

Way forward:
Diverse literatures and methodologies
Theoretical explorations
Empirical applications
Thank you!

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