

**IN SEARCH OF CAUSES:  
HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MIGRATION,  
1910–1990**

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The conceptual framework for this study is derived from the modern historiography of migration. This article will attempt to demonstrate some of the key concepts used in the modern scholarship of migration. For comparative purposes it is also useful to survey a few earlier works. Although the latter tend to be more simplistic, narrative in style, and devoid of interpretation or analysis, the older scholarship laid the groundwork for the modern.

Authors of all works in the field of migration have tried to answer the three basic questions of why people left, who left, and how many left during a given time-period. Scholars have looked at these questions from various angles and discovered that no single historical methodology can explain the phenomenon of migration. Consequently, they have turned to other fields, such as sociology, statistics, geography, psychology, and anthropology to name the most important ones, for help.

An important milestone in the study of migration occurred in 1960 when Frank Thistlethwaite presented a pioneering paper at an International History Conference in Stockholm. Above all, Thistlethwaite stressed the importance of the European background to mass migration and challenged historians to employ scientific tools and techniques.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Runblom and Hans Norma, ed., *From Sweden to America. A History of the Migration*. A Collective Work of the Uppsala Migration Research Project (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 14.

Thistlethwaite was reacting to the superficiality and subjectivity that characterized the literature. Much highly colored pseudo-historical writing came out of the Progressive era, and often reacted against the biases contained in the United States Immigration Commission Report of 1911, which sought to prove the undesirability of immigration from southern and eastern Europe.

Until 1960, most of the studies had been America-centered and tinged with filiopietism (an uncritical description of one's ethnic group). Many authors, frequently from older immigrant families, had motives that impeded sound scholarship. Hence they went out of their way to describe the positive contributions made by more recent immigrants, and thus counter the advocates of a restrictive immigration policy.<sup>2</sup>

For example, New England aristocrat Emily Balch, influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis on the importance of the frontier, wrote that "the personality that the emigrants develop in America is, in successful cases, something higher and finer than in the Old World."<sup>3</sup> In her book entitled *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (1910), she stressed poverty and personal misfortune as the principal reasons why many Slavs left their Old World.<sup>4</sup> Balch also underscored the cultural, educational, and religious similarities between Slavs and Anglo-Saxons "in spite of the differences of race, class, and sect."<sup>5</sup>

In the four decades that followed the publication of Balch's book, scholars offered no new analytical insights into the causes and consequences of immigration.<sup>6</sup> It was thus with good reason that Rowland Tappan Berthoff reacted to the pseudo-historical "scholarship" in his *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950*, criticizing the filiopietism employed by authors such as Balch.<sup>7</sup>

Berthoff's is an America-centered narrative emphasizing economic factors. Berthoff and other scholars recognized land hunger as the magnetic

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<sup>2</sup> Frank Thistlethwaite: "Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," XIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Stockholm, 1960, *Rapports, V: Histoire Contemporaine*, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Emily Greene Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>6</sup> Kristian Hvidt, *Flight to America. The Social Background of 300,000 Danish Emigrants* (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 32.

<sup>7</sup> Rowland Tappan Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1953), vii.

force that pulled people from Europe to the United States. His recognition that not all migrants came to the United States – that some chose other continents instead – was a step in a new direction.<sup>8</sup>

Theodore C. Blegen's *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825–1860*, introduced a whole new approach.<sup>9</sup> Blegen suggested that European backgrounds, a transit of people from one country to another, and the problems of adjusting to a new environment are three essential components of the emigration story. Blegen suggested that a chapter in nineteenth century European history “merges with the one in the making of America.”<sup>10</sup> He also was the first to look at different points of departure from Norway as a way of classifying Norwegian emigrants. Thus he was a precursor of the new direction given by Marcus Lee Hansen, who recognized the importance of emigrant departing places.

Walter Forster's *Zion on the Mississippi* (1953), an unusual book for its time, focused narrowly on one small religious settlement, Saxon Lutherans in Missouri, 1839–1841. The study looked at 665 people who left Saxony to settle in St. Louis.<sup>11</sup> Prior to 1953, no one had done a microscopic emigration study. Today, microstudies using modern methodology are the norm.

## The Search for Causes

Forster's work was outside of the mainstream when it was published. The majority of social scientists and historians were wrestling with the question of what were the causal factors of migration. According to Balch, cited earlier, European emigration was a product of conditions on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>12</sup> Historians and economists who had preceded

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<sup>8</sup> W. S. Shepperson in *British Emigration to North America. Projects and Opinions in the Early Victorian Period* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 246. Shepperson shows in an introduction that Berthoff was aware that British people were also emigrating to Australia and New Zealand. In the main narrative he pursued only those migrants going to the United States.

<sup>9</sup> Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825–1860* (Northfield, Minnesota: the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931), v.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>11</sup> Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi. The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri, 1839–1841* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*, 81.

Thistlethwaite thought that the central issue of all research into the causes of migration was whether “push or pull” factors were paramount. Contemporary scholars, however, consider the push and pull approach to be overly simplistic.

The statistical dimension became an integral part of the study of migration in the late 1920s. The first works were highly statistical and devoid of the human factor. Therefore it fell to a future generation of researchers to employ statistical methods used in the other social sciences.<sup>13</sup>

A shift from an America-centered study of migration appeared when Brinley Thomas undertook an economic study of migration. According to Thomas, Western Europe was the center of “Atlantic economy,” and the United States was peripheral. His chief objective in *Migration and Economic Growth: A Study of Great Britain and the Atlantic Economy* was “to trace the phases through which the process of migration passed.” Thomas wanted to analyze the determinants that affected migration on either side of the Atlantic.<sup>14</sup> Thus he moved away from the rigid push-pull model, and introduced a more sophisticated Europe-centered approach.

Marcus Lee Hansen, in *The Atlantic Migration*, stressed broad social forces, focusing on the multitudes rather than the elites.<sup>15</sup> Whereas historians before him had looked at Europe primarily as a sending point,

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<sup>13</sup> Harry Jerome, *Migration and Business Cycles*. (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 1926), 8. Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *Social and Economic Aspects of Swedish Population Movements, 1750–1933* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 169, 239. Jerome studied the relevance of business cycles to migration. His is a quantitative analysis of the mass movement phenomena. Jerome saw strong cyclical and seasonal movements in immigration and emigration. He deduced that the pull factor was dominant and concluded that “when emigration is not restricted, the character of the cyclical variations is closely similar to the cyclical variations in employment opportunity in the United States.” Although Jerome was using a new method, the focus of his approach was still in the New World. Jerome saw Europe’s importance only as a pool of potential emigrants – a passive component of migration. Jerome’s analysis is free of other considerations, such as psychological phenomena that affected migrations of peoples. Dorothy Swaine Thomas continued in the highly statistical approach. Her book has diagrams, correlation and regression analyses practically on every page. Thomas introduced a new element into the study of migration: internal movement within the departing country. Thomas showed, using the example of Sweden, that the “cyclical upswings in that country were a more powerful counter-stimulant” to the pull of the United States “than was generally recognized.”

<sup>14</sup> Brinley Thomas, *Migration and Economic Growth: A Study of Great Britain and the Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1973), 86.

<sup>15</sup> Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607–1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States* (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1940), xvii.

Hansen elevated European factors to a lofty new plain. He saw migration to the United States as “one aspect of the growth and spread of the population of Atlantic Europe.”<sup>16</sup> Although a prominent Danish scholar Kristian Hvidt sees Hansen as representing a “now discontinued line in the literature about emigration since the first World War,” Hansen’s questions, Who migrated and why?, formed a necessary link between the so-called “Old Narrative School” and the modern scholarship of the post-Thistlethwaite period.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Scientific Study of Migration: A New Era**

Thistlethwaite put the New World into a different perspective by viewing it as one of the many magnets that attracted migration-minded Europeans. Many migrants were satisfied to move within Europe; many others went to the United States, and then returned, only to re-emigrate later. Thistlethwaite sought a causal explanation for the complex pattern of European population movements in their totality. Because neither economic nor religious motives, nor any other one-dimensional mode of analysis, could fully explain these haphazard movements he called for an interdisciplinary approach.

Responding to Thistlethwaite’s challenge, researchers investigating migration turned increasingly to statistics and model-building. The Swedes took the lead with the Uppsala Project started in 1962 and completed in 1976. The findings and recommendations of the Swedish researchers shaped the subsequent study of migration. Rejecting the push-pull model as simplistic, they argued that modern methodology calls for small-scale studies rather than for works dealing with large aggregates; analysis of the spread of information on the New World within the European countries; examination of emigration at all levels from parishes to countries; and attention to the time variable in order to observe intensity and changes of direction in migratory flows.<sup>18</sup>

The Uppsala group also made recommendations regarding sources. Quantitative sources ranging from township records to national census

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>17</sup> Hvidt, *Flight to America*, 36.

<sup>18</sup> Runblom and Norman, ed., *From Sweden to America*, 16.

data were significant in this respect, although primary group-level information such as correspondence, brochures distributed by steamship agents, etc., was likely to be decisive to migration and thus needed to be considered.<sup>19</sup> Sune Akerman, the head of the Uppsala Project, thought that the study of geographical movements was not only a question “of scrutinizing them per se but of dealing with the social change and its prerequisites in general.”<sup>20</sup> Akerman proposed that aggregate statistics were unsatisfactory unless complemented by data concerning individuals. From these data, Akerman suggested that a common denominator could be discerned. Questions such as when, from where and why immigrants left were to be considered, too, along with re-emigration and internal movements.<sup>21</sup>

Akerman regarded the role of leadership and the “initiative behavior” of human migration as vital to migration analysis. He proposed that many social models could be used to explain why people migrated. While other social scientists placed more emphasis on migrants’ reactions to their environment, economists stressed push-pull factors (i.e., dim prospects for a better life in Europe versus the “land of opportunity” that beckoned on the other side of the Atlantic). As noted above, Akerman and his colleagues concluded that push and pull factors were insufficient as the basis for an explanatory model.<sup>22</sup> Akerman also suggested that methods of psychiatric research might be relevant to the study of migration.<sup>23</sup>

A motto of the migration scholarship of the 1980s could be “written for scholars, it remains accessible to interested lay readers,” a description by a reviewer of a comprehensive but a microscopic study of Norwegian migration by Jon Gjerde’s *From Peasants to Farmers*.<sup>24</sup> Modern researchers have frequently emphasized the importance of the information by early emigrants to the people “back home.” Akerman encouraged the in-depth study of this phenomenon through the use of church records, catechetical examination registers, birth and death records, and in- and out-migration

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>20</sup> Sune Akerman “Towards and Understanding of Emigration Processes,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 3 (1978): 131.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>24</sup> Frederick C. Luebke, Review of “From Peasants to Farmers,” *Minnesota History* (Winter 1985): 340.

lists.<sup>25</sup> Yda Sauerssig-Schreuder studied Dutch Catholic migration and showed that family contact and the type of information exchange Akerman had in mind played a significant role in the choice of an initial settlement in the New World.<sup>26</sup>

Geographers John Rice and Robert Ostegren examined immigration from one village in Sweden over a period of twenty-five years. They looked at every single departure in order to comprehend the aggregate picture and concluded that economic motives for migration were paramount. Perceptions of the potential migrants' economic situation varied greatly even among individuals of similar socio-economic status. The two geographers also theorized that some people were "born movers," while others were "born stayers." A more empirical finding was that age is an important variable.<sup>27</sup> Rice and Ostegren concluded that persons with "leadership" qualities were the first ones to leave. With their decision to emigrate a "diffusion of the decision to emigrate followed." Wealthy families were the first ones to leave, while the landless dominated the later movement.<sup>28</sup> The authors thus dispelled a notion long held by many historians who saw migration as a movement predominantly of the destitute.

Hvidt, in *Flight to America: The Social Background of 300,000 Danish Emigrants*, employed a highly statistical approach. Hvidt thought that statistics were "dead unless viewed in relation to the population which the emigrants left."<sup>29</sup> He was not interested in statistical evidence for the whole group of migrants, but for every single individual each with his or her history.<sup>30</sup> Using a statistical base provided by the Danish police registers, Hvidt described the development and structure of Danish emigration. He saw internal migration to urban areas and overseas migration as two sides of the same coin.<sup>31</sup>

Migration was a result of overpopulation of the cities caused by surplus rural population looking to urban centers for employment, according to

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<sup>25</sup> Akerman, "Towards an Understanding of Emigration Processes," 147.

<sup>26</sup> Yda Sauerssig-Schreuder, "Dutch Catholic Immigrant Settlement in Wisconsin" in Robert Swierenga, ed., *The Dutch in America: Immigration, Settlement, and Cultural Change* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 105.

<sup>27</sup> John G. Rice and Robert Ostegren, "The Decision to Emigrate: A Study in Diffusion," *Geografiska Annaler* 60B (1978): 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>29</sup> Kristian Hvidt, *Flight to America*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

Hvidt.<sup>32</sup> He also concluded that some migration from country to town was due to “social buoyancy” (i.e., a desire to better one’s social status). External migration (or emigration) resulted when industrialization began to lag behind the influx of people, a phenomenon that was aided by the pull factor of early emigrants’ letters.<sup>33</sup>

Hvidt concluded that leaving for the United States was not determined by either push or pull but by “both dissatisfaction and attraction.”<sup>34</sup> Hvidt considered the simple push-pull model to be an unsatisfactory explanation for the causes and effects of emigration.<sup>35</sup>

Philip Taylor’s general study of European emigration to the United States draws on Thistlethwaite’s recommendations. Taylor recognized the importance of economic factors for emigration (e.g., employment opportunities), but also stressed freedom as an incentive that pulled people to the New World. He agreed with geographers Rice and Ostegren that the first wave of emigrants was not the poorest but the most intelligent and skilled (and thus relatively well-off) who had the self-confidence, wherewithal, and information to undertake the passage to the New World. Above all, Taylor considered the population explosion the main cause for migration, a point of view that the more recent scholars (notably Gjerde) consider simplistic.<sup>36</sup>

The pull factor of the United States affected European countries in varying degrees, according to Saueressig-Schreuder. For example, the “distant magnet” of the United States exercised a limited force on the Dutch. The relatively small number of emigrants who were “pushed” to the New World went as a result of a subsistence crisis in agriculture and a decline in rural industry.<sup>37</sup>

While Thistlethwaite believed that this lack of emigration resulted from a strong attachment of the Dutch to home, Pieter Stovis in his article “Dutch International Migration” proved this thesis invalid. The Dutch did not move to the United States but many also did not stay at home – instead they migrated within the European continent.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., viii.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Taylor, *The Distant Magnet: European Emigration to the U.S.A.* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971).

<sup>37</sup> Yda Saueressig-Schreuder, “Dutch Catholic Immigrant Settlement in Wisconsin,” 109.

<sup>38</sup> Pieter R. D. Stovis “Dutch International Migration, 1815–1910,” in Robert Swierenga, ed., *The Dutch in America: Immigration, Settlement, and Cultural Change* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 57.

Germany is a country of heavy migration, both intra- and intercontinental. German scholarship concerning the subject had been lagging behind the refined scholarship on the Dutch, Italian, and Norwegian migration of the 1980s<sup>39</sup> until Mack Walker published a book entitled *Germany and the Emigration, 1816–1885*. Walker's *Auswanderer* went to the United States “less to build something new than to regain and conserve something old.”<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, the Germans wanted to “keep the ways of life they were used to, which the new Europe seemed determined to destroy.” They traveled many thousands of miles for the sake of keeping their roots, customs, and family cohesion and to remain the masters of their own destiny.<sup>41</sup> People decided to leave because conditions were bad and they blamed the King, who was aloof and indifferent to their plight.<sup>42</sup>

As no definitive answer has ever been given, recent scholarship is still concerned with the question, “Why did people leave their homeland?” In the preface to the *Perspectives in American History*, editors D. Fleming and B. Bailyn remarked that people do not leave for something as abstract as the prospect of economic gain. Rejecting the primacy of economic factors, they suggested that the common denominator for German, Dutch, Norwegian, and Italian migrants was an environment of changing social and economic circumstances – impersonal forces of historical magnitude – which individuals were powerless to resist. The response of many tradition-bound Europeans, ironically, was to take flight from the deteriorating Old Order in Europe to the New World in America where they hoped to retain the basic elements of traditional rural life threatened by the Industrial Revolution.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The best example is Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway to the Upper Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>40</sup> Walter Allen Knittle wrote a dissertation on the earliest German emigrants to the United States that was published in 1936 as *The Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration: A British Government Redemption Project to Manufacture Naval Stores* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia University, 1936) these Germans came from the Palatinate, and the British helped them in the crossing of the Atlantic following the Thirty Years' War. Mack Walker, an American historian of Germany touches only incidentally on the emigrants' destination (the United States) in his *Germany and the Emigration, 1816–1885* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

<sup>41</sup> Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, 69.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>43</sup> D. Fleming and B. Bailyn, eds., *Perspectives in American History*, 7 (Cambridge, Mass.: Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, 1973), v.

Reactions to modernization varied from region to region, however.<sup>44</sup> John W. Briggs, a student of Italian migration, asked a familiar question: were people pushed unwillingly or pulled “by the lure of greater prospects”? Briggs suggested, not surprisingly, that there was a little bit of both in the Italian case.<sup>45</sup> Briggs believed there was a “selective process” at work “tapping the most energetic and resourceful” but not penetrating “the most depressed and impoverished.”<sup>46</sup> Briggs refuted the notion that Italian immigrants were a homogeneous mass of ignorant and illiterate peasants who cared only about putting bread on the table. On the contrary, Briggs found that Italian immigrants placed a high value on education. If public schools nearby were unavailable, Italians built their own parochial schools. In the best American tradition, they founded voluntary organizations and mutual aid societies – a clear reflection of their concern for the future.<sup>47</sup>

Dino Cinel’s *From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrants’ Experience* is one of the most complete studies of Italian migration to date. *From Italy to San Francisco* is a “social history dealing with change and continuity in the lives of Italians” who migrated either permanently or temporarily to the United States.<sup>48</sup> The main sources for Cinel’s study were histories of three generations of almost 2,000 families whose second generation had emigrated.<sup>49</sup> By looking at areas differentially affected by emigration and then watching migrants from these areas over a period of time, Cinel introduced both time and space variable.

In many respects, Cinel’s argument against the inferiority of Italian emigrants is similar to that of Briggs. Italians did not leave home to escape poverty, according to Cinel, but rather to position themselves for the future; they wanted to leave for the United States, settle there for two to three years, save money, and return to Italy to buy the land that they valued so much. Emigration was a strategy for realizing dreams in Italy rather than a commitment to a new life in America.<sup>50</sup> Thus the economic push from Italy

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<sup>44</sup> John W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage: Immigrants to Three American Cities, 1890–1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), xvi.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>48</sup> Dino Cinel, *From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrant Experience* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1982), 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

was not so simple as it is often supposed, according to Cinel.<sup>51</sup> Unlike most other immigrant groups, many Italians did eventually re-emigrate.

One of Cinel's most important contributions was to debunk the view that Italians were a homogeneous group of landless peasants. He compared Northern and Southern Italian provinces and described how the Italian provinces differed in terms of literacy rates and income levels.<sup>52</sup> Cinel further showed that poor areas were not always the sources of heaviest emigration. Little or no emigration came from some poor areas.<sup>53</sup> In regions with predominantly large estates, little buying or selling took place. These areas were prone to peasant revolts, suggesting a fight or flight response on the part of land-poor "farmers."<sup>54</sup>

The land was both a status symbol and the foundation of the family unit. Cinel concluded that the availability of land for purchase was the key factor in determining rates of migration from different areas, but the process turned out to be opposite to what one might expect. The incidence of migration was highest in areas where land-for-sale was most abundant, rather than the other way around, because peasants intended to purchase the land from savings accumulated in America.<sup>55</sup>

Therefore emigration can be viewed as an "alternative to restricted opportunities in traditional agrarian societies."<sup>56</sup> Here again the inadequacies of the deterministic, mechanistic, and simplistic push-pull explanation of emigration come to light. "Such an explanation fails to take into account social factors that influence how people responded to economic needs," according to Cinel.<sup>57</sup> From studying Italian provinces, Cinel concluded that there were three types of responses to poverty in Italy in the late nineteenth century. People either remained in Italy and tried to "change the society by means of militant working class organizations," or they emigrated to the New World or elsewhere, or they did not respond and accepted the status quo.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 9. The new environment of San Francisco changed most of the Italians' goals and they decided to stay. This change, however, was more a product of circumstances than a result of a clear choice, according to Cinel.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>56</sup> Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 27.

<sup>57</sup> Cinel, *From Italy to San Francisco*, 69.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 70.

Josef Barton in *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890–1950* further developed the theme of land and the ownership of land. Barton, echoing Briggs and Cinel, explained the importance of the land tenure system and its relevance to emigration.<sup>59</sup> According to Barton, emigration was further caused by a “growing imbalance between the needs of peasant households and the opportunities for nonagricultural employment.” Thus people left to “survive the threats to an old way of life.”<sup>60</sup> They did not leave, however, only to survive physically, but also to preserve a way of life, consciously transplanting communal institutions, keeping alive their native culture, and reconstituting familiar social structures.<sup>61</sup>

Slovaks, Italians, and Rumanians migrated for similar reasons, but the phenomenon differed. Among Italians village chains predominated, while Slovaks and Rumanians migrated in district rather than village chains. The East Europeans seem to have emphasized local ties much less than the Italians.<sup>62</sup>

The questions that researchers into Scandinavian migration raise do not differ much from those asked by the students of Italian migration. Scandinavian immigrants, unlike their Italian counterparts, did not re-emigrate. The Nordic ethnic groups tended to settle in rural areas of the United States and to transplant their communities from rural areas in Scandinavia to the western United States. Migrants from all parts of Europe shared a common desire to retain their “old ways.”

Robert Ostegren studied community building in the New World by tracing the emigration of approximately 85 households from a Swedish village to a settlement in Minnesota. Ostegren found that the Swedes transplanted social and cultural institutions but the new environment forced them to make economic adjustments.<sup>63</sup>

Gjerde, in *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West*, also looked at community transplantation.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>60</sup> Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 47.

<sup>61</sup> Josef B. Barton, “Eastern and Southern Europeans” in John Higham, ed., *Ethnic Leadership in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Ostegren “A Community Transplanted: The Formative Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Community in the Upper Middle West,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 5 (1979): 189–212.

The book is an excellent study covering every aspect of life in two Norwegian communities and encompassing virtually all the modern scholarship in the field of migration. In the course of analyzing the Old World community, Gjerde concluded that it would be overly simplistic to consider overpopulation as the driving force behind 19<sup>th</sup> century migration. He found evidence of improving economic conditions despite the growing population. Feared loss of social status was the reason most Norwegians emigrated, Gjerde suggested. This apparent preoccupation with status was enhanced by a pietistic religious revival in Norway, which was coming into conflict with the state religion.

Gjerde was successful in fusing all the relevant ideas from F. J. Turner to Thistlethwaite while injecting his own original contributions into a comprehensive, interdisciplinary work, which included history, sociology, anthropology, and statistics. As a result, the work represented the best historians had to offer in the field of migration in the closing decades of the twentieth century.