

# BiB50-Turning Gold: Frontiers in Policy Relevant Population Research

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## Linking internal and international migration over the life course

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European Research Council  
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*Centre d'Estudis  
Demogràfics*

## Migration research in historical perspective

### Up to 1970's

Research focus on **internal migration** and associated population re-distribution and urbanization processes

*Earlier theorizations and empirical studies based on internal migration*

### Since 1970's

Increasing border control, pressures for foreign labor and emerging multicultural societies drew research attention into **international migration**

*Migration has come to mean international migration*

## Separate research bodies

	<u>Internal migration</u>	<u>International migration</u>
<b>Research questions and agendas</b>	Urbanization and population redistribution, regional inequalities, labour and housing dynamics, couples and families	Migration policies and governance, integration and social cohesion, flows of information and remittances, brain drain/gain, forced migration and refugees
<b>Theoretical approaches</b>	Human capital, gravity models, life cycle and lifecourse, household bargaining	Transnationalism, social networks, push-pull factors, institutionalism, globalization
<b>Methodological approaches</b>	Origin-destination matrices, move features (distance, duration,...)	Migrant stocks, national and ethnic-group comparisons, policy analysis

## Integrated but not mixed

Bell and Ward (2000)

*internal and international movement form **part of the same continuum of population movement***

They should therefore be studied jointly rather than in isolation

Skeldon (2006)

*international migration is **distinctive in its legal and social implications***

The distinction between internal and international migration categories should be maintained

## **Why should we care about research integration?**

### **Interpretation of the relevance of migration to individuals and societies**

- Heterogeneity of population movement (levels, flows and structures)
- Migration decisions and consequences (individual and group outcomes)
- Migration's embeddedness in communities, social networks and family relations
- Selective migration and context-level transformation (e.g. Pop. diversity, labour and housing markets)

### **Blurring boundaries and the definition of migration**

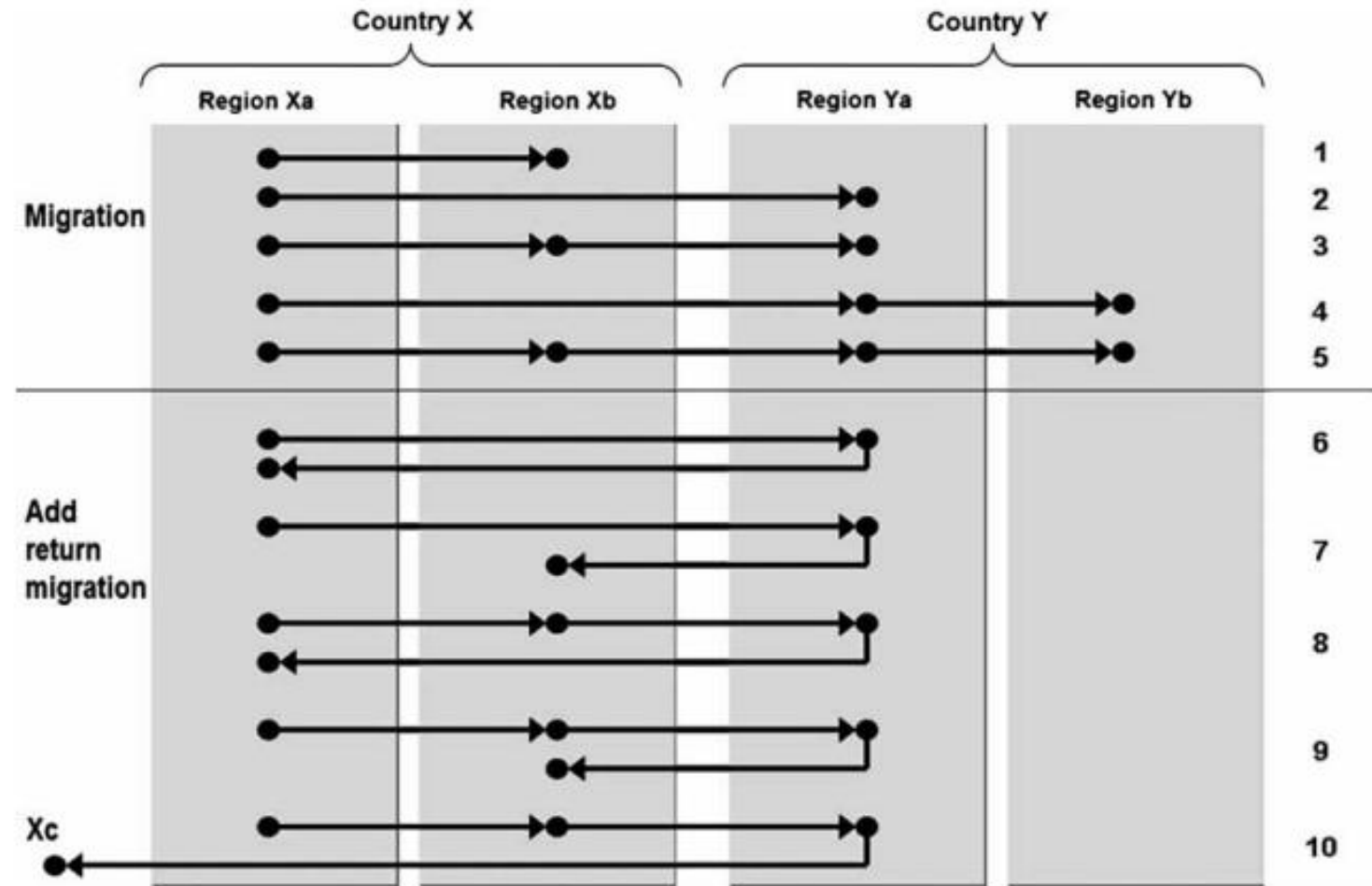
- Geo-political events and globalizing dynamics
- Changing nature and configuration of borders
- Migration as non-permanent, repeated and reinforcing process

## Theoretical insights

- **Ravenstein's (1885)** idea of stepwise migration from traditional-rural to modern-urban environments adopted by international migration literature
- **Zelinsky's (1971)** mobility transition model integrates internal and international movement through phases of societal modernization and demographic change
- **Pryor (1981)** addresses the applicability of theories developed for internal migration to international migration, and vice versa
- **King and Skeldon (2010)** introduce a schematic model of the functional linkages between internal and international migration, and discuss approaches for further theoretical fusion

**King and Skeldon  
(2010)**

Theoretical trajectories  
featuring functional links  
between internal and  
international migration at  
individual and aggregate  
levels



**Figure 1.** Migration pathways

## **Hypothesized links** (King and Skeldon 2010; Bernard and Perales 2021)

### 1. Complementarity relation

- Seemingly independent processes (performing different roles that are functionally linked); internal and international migrants as different subsets of the population  
E.g. attraction of internal and international migrants with differentiated sets of skills in large urban areas; household risk diversification strategy

### 2. Substitution relation

- Competing alternatives to available opportunities  
E.g. demand of migrant labour in highly urbanized countries (where internal outflows have exhausted domestic labour supply)

### 3. Sequential relation

- One form of movement leads the other  
E.g. move to a city as a pre-step to emigration; international migration leading the displacement of local populations (gentrification, white flight)



## Interdependence between internal and international flows

Skeldon (2006)

*How internal and international migration relate to each other?*

Suggestive evidence from Asian countries

### Internal migration affects international migration

- International migration from/to Asian countries was fairly recent, long pre-dated by systems of internal movement and despite trading diasporas
- Moves from villages to cities often before international migration, but the diaspora and local brokers also act as direct links btw. villages and overseas destinations
- With increasing urbanization, sources of internal migration to cities become exhausted and were replaced by international migrations (e.g. Japan and S. Korea)

### International migration affects internal migration

- Pronounced emigration in specific origin areas (through labour shortages and remittances) creates the demand for labourers from nearby regions

## Profiles of internal and International migrants

Del Rey Poveda (2007)

Lindstron and Lauster (2001)

Stark and Taylor (1991)

Zabin and Hughes (1995)

*Are internal migrants  
different from international  
migrants?*

Evidence comparing internal and  
US-bound migration from  
Mexico

### Different profiles

- US-bound migrants are older male, with higher resources
- Women and children are more likely to be internal migrants

### Different strategies

- US-bound migration is mainly a form of investment
- Internal migration is a response to precarious conditions in origin and a lower-risk strategy geared towards household survival
- Risk diversification within households: internal migrants employment as a cushion for failure of US-migration from other members

Social networks are equally important for any type of migration

### Caveats

- Many international migrants have previously been internal migrants
- Migration dynamics from poorer and distant countries to large economies might exhibit greater selectivity
- Results with European samples display more similarities between internal and International migrants (e.g. Bernard and Perales 2021)

## Environmental (“push”) factors

Sedova and Kalkuhl (2020)

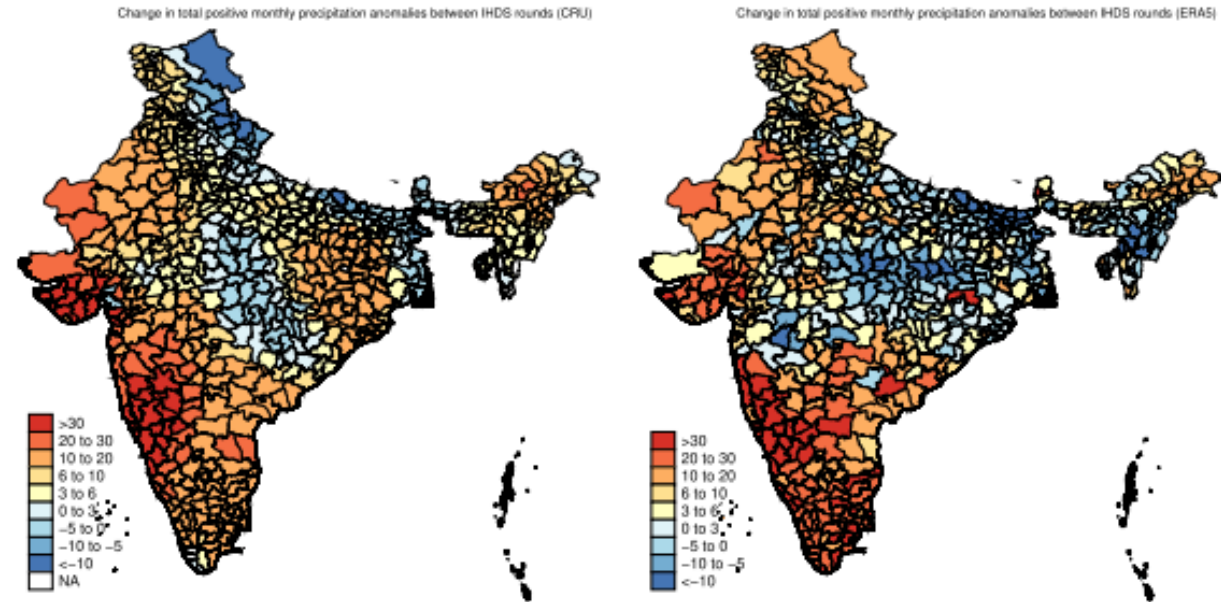
*Who are the climate migrants and where do they go?*

Evidence from India using weather station data linked to longitudinal survey data

### Positive precipitation anomalies

1999–2003

2006–2010



- Substitution : Adverse weather shocks decrease migration to nearby rural areas and international migration, but increases internal moves to cities
- Complementarity: Positive weather shocks relate to higher internal and international migration

## Returns to internal and international migration

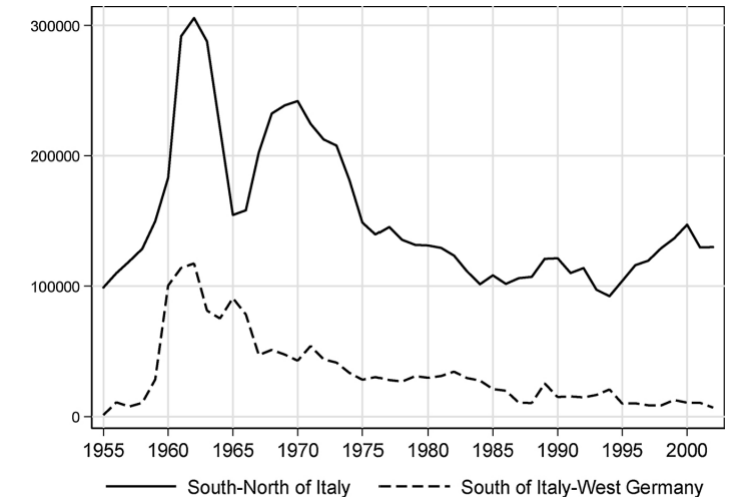
Panichella (2018)

*The class attainment and the career mobility of Southern Italians in Northern Italy and in West Germany.*

Evidence from linked Italian and German panel data

Similar processes underlie the migration from Southern Italians to Northern Italy and Germany in the 1950/70's

- Crisis of agricultural employment in Southern Italy
- Demand of (unskilled) labor in industrial sectors in both destinations
- Southern migrants were usually male, of working age, poorly educated, and from the rural areas of the South



Integration of Southern migrants in the destination societies:

- In both destinations, Southern migrants integrated into the unskilled urban working class, and had fewer opportunities of upward social mobility than the native population
- Public sector jobs somewhat allowed migrants entering the middle classes in Northern Italy

## **What does prevent research integration?**

### **Disciplinary issues**

- Migration studies as an interdisciplinary field with little cross-fertilization

### **Theoretical and conceptual issues**

- Absence of theoretical guidance
- Data-dependent and ethnocentric conceptualizations (e.g. movers vs stayers; first and second generation migrants; migration as change of admin areas)

### **Methodological issues**

- Methodological nationalism
- Tracking international movement

## Moving forward

### Theoretical transference and integration contingent on study objects, contexts and analytical dimensions

- E.g. Transfer ideas of *social integration* from international migration studies, in particular contexts, could be applied to internal migrant populations
- E.g. Research integration by elaborating concepts and analytical tools that bridge research traditions to explain migration processes

### Promise in recent methodological advances

- Increasing number and diversity of sources of (big) data and data linkages (granular spatial and temporal information; enable tracking individual trajectories)

### Shed light on inter-linked migration processes, and their implications for sending and receiving areas

- E.g. Urbanization and development in poorer countries, differential selectivity and returns to migration (attitudes and capabilities for migration), trans-regional/national ties, legal barriers
- Immobility and migration as an individual's trajectory across time and space

Lifetime migration

A *discrete-time* approach dominates migration research, where the focus is on

- *single* events and practices  
(movers vs stayers; migration often regarded as permanent)
- *point-in-time* and life stage-specific analyses  
(migrations isolated from individuals' wider trajectories)



**Observation:** Migrations are often *repeated* over individual lifetimes

Azose and Raftery (2019):

Return migration  
accounts for 25% of  
global migration flows  
and transit migration 10%

Bernard (2017):

Older Europeans moved  
between 5 times (Denmark)  
and 1.6 times (Greece) in  
early and mid-adulthood

## Lifetime migration patterns in 20 European countries (birth cohorts 1950/65)

Immobile	70.9	-
Internal migration (only)	23.7	81.4
One move	11.4	39.2
Several moves	12.3	42.2
International migration (only)	3.6	12.4
One move	1.9	6.5
Several moves	1.7	5.8
<b>Internal and international migration</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

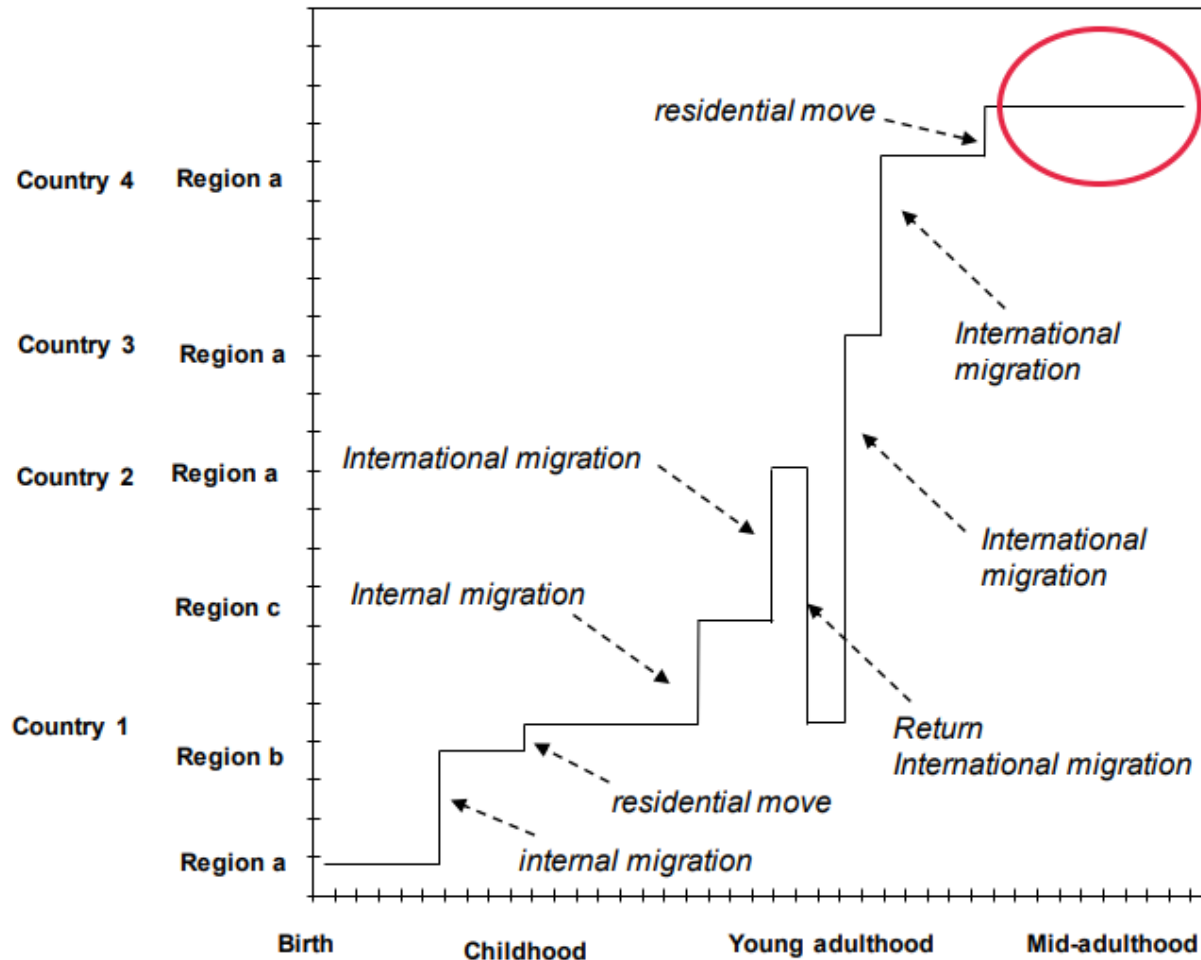
Internal moves are across larger territorial divisions (NUTS 2), and only in survey countries

Accounting for moves within NUTS 2, the large majority of international migrants are also internal migrants

Migration is measured from birth to age 50 by type of move (%)

Source: Waves 3 and 7 of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement (SHARE)

## Observation: Migration trajectories are diverse and complex



Example of a fictitious individual trajectory

Mazzucato *et al.*

*Mobility trajectories of young lives (MO-TRAYL)*

Analyse mobility data of young Ghanaians growing up in and between the Netherlands and Ghana

Single internal and international move

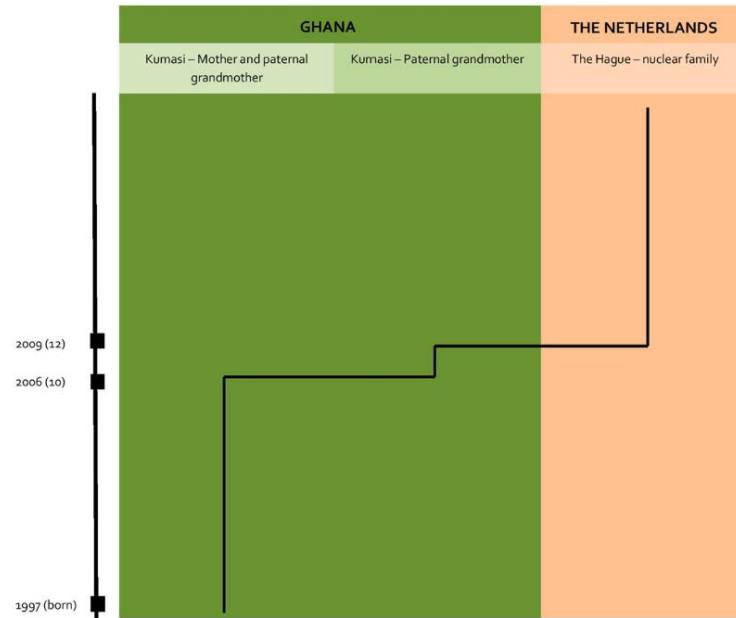


Figure 1. Elyah's mobility trajectory. Source: Fieldwork, 2015–2016.

Multiple moves

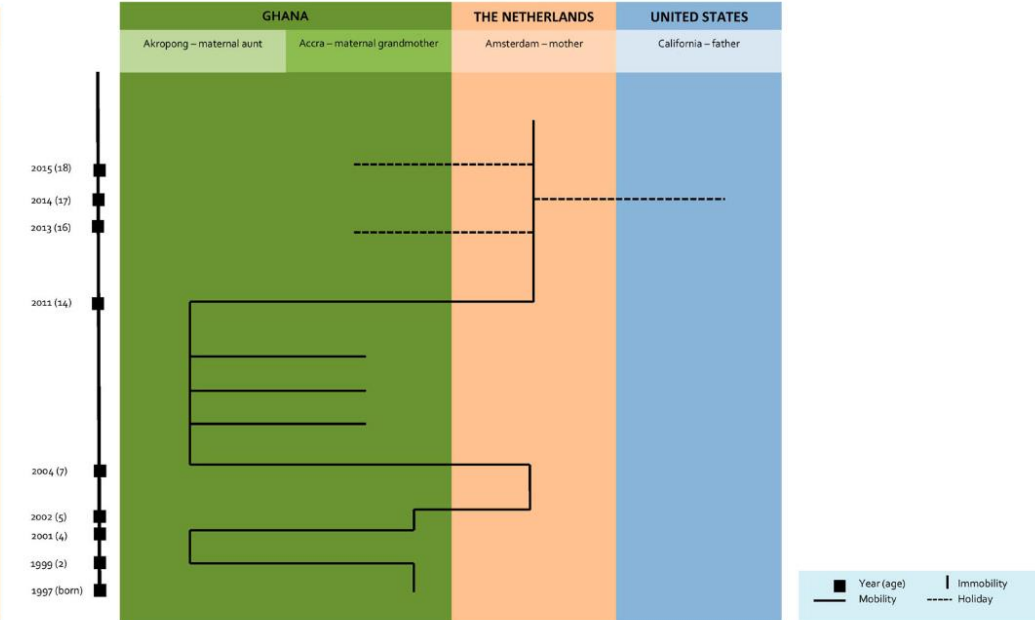


Figure 4. Akua's mobility trajectory. Source: Fieldwork, 2015–2016.

Mobility trajectories as alternative categories beyond first/second generation migrants or ethnic groups, focusing on differences within migrant and ethnic groups and emphasizing links between internal and international movement

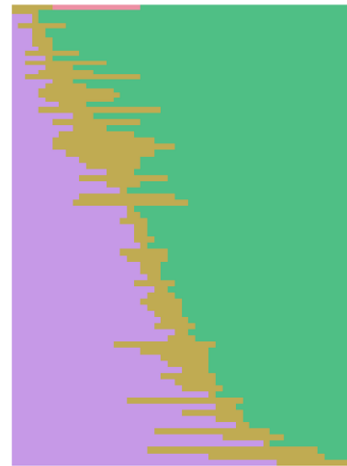
## Selection of typical migration trajectory patterns

Bernard and Vidal (2023):

*Ideal-typical migration trajectories in 20 European countries*

Lifetime migration data (age 0 to 50) for a cohort born between 1950 and 1965

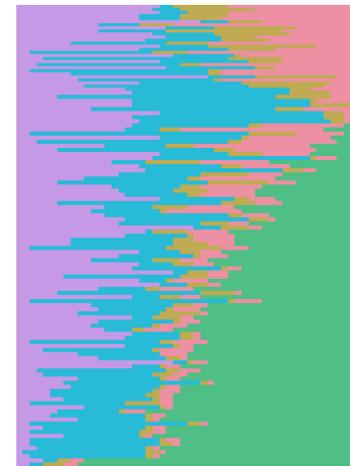
Used sequence analysis to unveil the diverse internal-international migration patterns over the life course



0 4 8 12 17 22 27 32 37 42 47

Internal movement after emigration

(Southern European)



0 4 8 12 17 22 27 32 37 42 47

Internal movement around short stay abroad

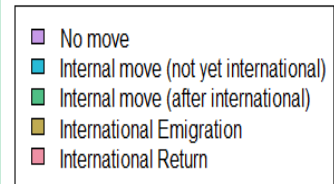
(Western European)  
\*Northern European feature international circulation



0 4 8 12 17 22 27 32 37 42 47

Internal movement before (and after) emigration

(Eastern European)



**Observation:** Individuals' backgrounds shape opportunities and outcomes over the life course

“Those who moved more often as children and adolescents moved more often as adults, and were more likely to move in response to several life course transitions”

Myers (1999):

*Residential mobility as a way of life: Evidence of intergenerational similarities.*

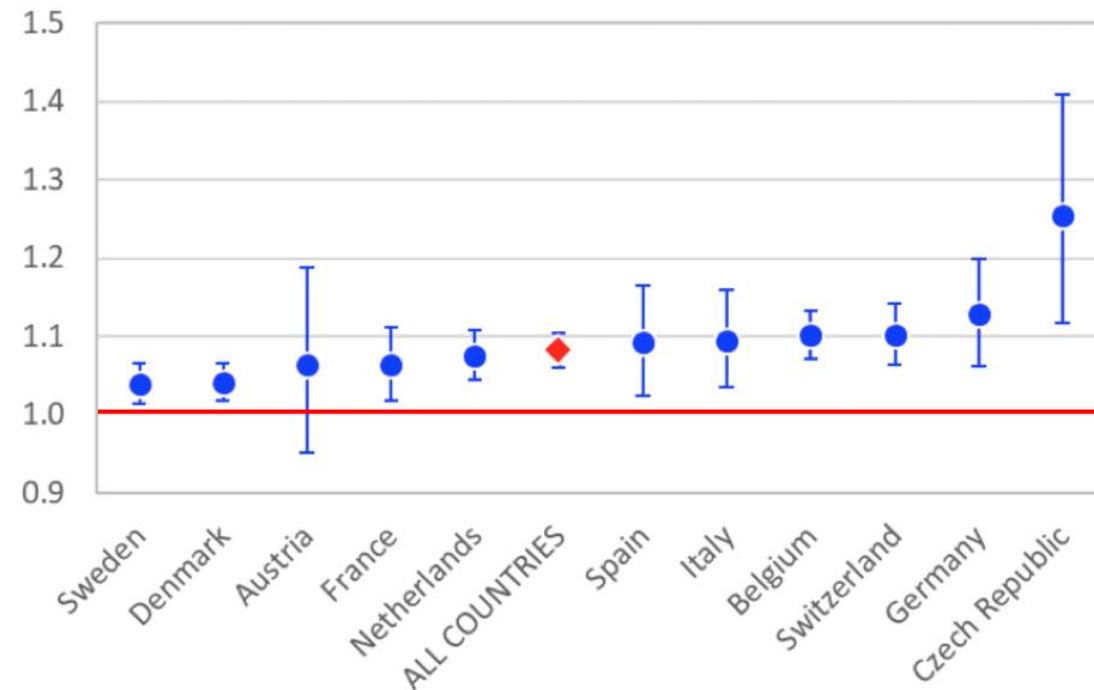
# Childhood background and intergenerational reproduction

Bernard and Vidal (2021):

*Do childhood migration experiences affect migration behaviour in adulthood?*

- Childhood moves (ages 0-17) significantly increase the likelihood of moving internally or internationally in adulthood (ages 18-50)
- Particularly true in countries where moving (as a child) is less common

**Figure 2** Incidence rate ratios of the number of moves in childhood on adult moves, 1946-1957 birth cohorts



\*Analysis based on retrospective records for representative samples of individuals aged 50+ in 11 European countries

## Mobile lives in space and time

Migration as

- a temporal process that is recurrent, repeated and reinforcing
- interdependent forms of movement at multiple spatial scales
- underlying biographical and inter-generational mechanisms

Growing calls to adopt a *broader* life course perspective in migration research:

Findlay et al. 2015; Coulter et al 2016; Vidal and Huinink 2019;  
McCollum et al. 2020; Bernard 2022



## **IUSSP Panel on lifetime migration (2023-2025)**

### Objectives:

- Recognize the heterogeneity of migration behaviors in individual lives, from lifetime sedentarism to repeat migration
- **Integrate research on internal and international migration**
- Establish how migration trajectories underlie individual and societal wellbeing

International Union for the  
Scientific Study of Population  
(IUSSP)



Check out the website

(<https://www.iussp.org/en/panel/lifetime-migration>)

## IUSSP Panel activities

- Training workshops
  - “Mining migration trajectories with R” (International Forum on Migration Statistics)
  - “ML methods for the analysis of migration trajectories” (online)
- Special sessions at international conferences
  - Conference of British Society for Population Studies, Newcastle
  - International Population Conference, Brisbane
- Webinars
  - “Data infrastructure for the study of international migration trajectories”
  - “Long-term impacts of spatial mobility on health”
- Scientific workshops
  - One-day workshop at the European Population Conference, Edinburgh



# Thank you!

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