PART I

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS
Human mobility balances the supply of and demand for human capital over small and large distances connected by information flows and means of transportation. Migration involves costs, so people who move are generally seeking options, not necessarily “unlimited opportunities.” Regions and societies of departure lost (and, in the present, lose) human capital—the capabilities of young working-age men and women into whom families and states had invested training and education—while societies and economies of destination gained (and gain) productive and tax-paying input. Although scholars and political leaders generally pay more attention to long-distance migration, usually undercounting women and thus providing a skewed data set, much migration is short- or medium-distance. Migration internal to empires and countries is far more extensive than is migration that crosses international boundaries. Migration systems are empirically observable patterns of large-scale movement over extended periods of time. They may be region-specific or they may be transcontinental or transoceanic. Analysis of patterns requires an integrated perspective on short- and long-distance, men’s and women’s, single and family migrations. It requires distinguishing among types of migration—temporary labor, permanent urban, permanent rural settlement, refugee or deportation—but also being aware that the types may intermesh. Finally, it requires combining attention to economic frames in the societies of departure and arrival and state-imposed legal frames with consideration of migrants’ life-course perspectives and actual decision-making.¹

Patterns and directions of migrations changed, and during this era there were four distinct periods: from the 1770s to the 1830s, from the 1830s to the 1930s, from the early 1950s to the 1990s, and finally the beginning of the twenty-first century. Region-specific political and economic developments, changing borders and power hierarchies between empires and states, shifting relative importance of medium or small economic regions, and war, revolution, or natural disasters all impacted individuals’ and families’ migration decisions. Aware of the local problems in eking out bare subsistence in rural or urban economies and having information about better working and living conditions elsewhere, individuals and families decided in the context of systems of norms and values – Confucianism, Islam, Christianity, or other. Migration in turn had an impact on families, gender relations, intergenerational hierarchies and on society-wide economic and social relations. Quantitatively, those making decisions – the world population – grew from just under 1 billion in 1800 to around 7 billion in 2010. Accordingly, in absolute terms the number of migrants grew, but relatively – number of migrants per 1000 population – the ratio depended on socio-economic factors. Increasing nearby options with relatively low costs for a move, like urban development and industrialization, increased mobility. So did imperial expansion – the ratio of mobility among the Dutch, for example, was highest during the country’s seventeenth-century colonizing expansion. Quantitative data about actual migrations are often lacking or skewed, since assumptions about the sedentariness of “common” people initially prevented an interest in data collection, and when data began to be collected in the nineteenth century, the emphasis on the state and nation meant they were collected only at interstate borders, and then in a gendered mental framework that relegated women and children to “associational” status to male migrants.

In the first of the four periods, the 1770s to the 1830s, macro-regionally distinct patterns of migrations were connected, in that a small number of heavily armed and powerful colonizer migrants imposed their rule and established export economies in many places. But, as yet, vast regions like China remained practically untouched. From the 1830s to the 1930s hemispheric migration systems may be discerned: the continued forced migrations of the Africa–Plantation Belt-Americas slave regime; the massive expansion of the transatlantic migration system and of the Russian–Siberian one; the imposition of a British India and Southern China Plantation Belt system of indentured servitude (replacing the usage of African slave labor); and late in the nineteenth century a North China-to-Manchuria system. After a kind of intermission due to the Global
Migrations

Depression of the 1930s and World War II, new macro-regional systems developed in the early 1950s that lasted until the 1990s. These were changed in the early twenty-first century with the emergence of new, powerful economies in some of the formerly colonized societies, although this new pattern was interrupted by the financial crisis of 2008.

Migrations from the 1770s to the 1830s

In the so-called Age of Revolution in the Atlantic World, British and continental European anti-revolutionary warfare made migration perilous. Although vast numbers of hired or drafted soldiers were moved, and refugees, uprooted people, and return migrants crisscrossed zones of fighting, survivors were often left stranded somewhere. In the hinge region of the Mediterranean-European and Indian Ocean-Asian Worlds the power struggle of the Tsarist and Habsburg Empires against the Ottoman Empire sent soldiers moving and Muslim peasant families fleeing. Thus vast territories north of the Black Sea were opened for resettlement by immigrant peasant families of other faiths, mostly from the smaller states of southwestern Germany. In the Balkans, the Habsburgs’ re-imposition of feudal exactions, like their earlier re-catholicization in Hungary, increased out-migration. In the process the ethno-culturally and religiously pluralist structures of the Ottoman Empire – a model for Europe at the time – weakened. In the Tsarist Empire, the administration made Siberia’s climatically harsh regions (long part of the global fur trade economy) a destination for political and criminal deportees, but unauthorized peasant migrants who lacked land and who preferred distance to state control and government tax collectors made its fertile southern belt their destination in the eighteenth century. In the Chinese Empire, economic growth and innovation in specific economic sectors drew migrants in search of better investment options for their human capital. Imperial expansion involved uprooting, a change of culture, and resettlement migrations. As regards the global plantation belt, which had developed with the Iberian powers’ acquisition of the Caribbean in the early sixteenth century and the accompanying forced slave migrations, human rights concepts and economic change brought an outlawing of the slave trade in 1807/1808 in areas controlled by signatories to the Vienna Congress, but not in Brazil for example. In defiance of their countries’ laws, however, slavers from Europe and the Americas continued the trade to the 1870s. In Latin America as in the emerging USA, trans-European warfare with its transatlantic corollaries from the 1760s to 1815 resulted in a decline of
colonizer power and the emergence of independent states by the 1820s. Involuntary mobility was part of the warfare as soldiers, slaves, and refugees moved, as was voluntary mobility with the flight of Spanish-Creole elites. In contrast to North America, no immigrant-attracting economies developed in Latin America in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Internal migrations and hemispheric migration systems from the 1830s to the 1930s

The nineteenth century saw the development of systemic frames of mobility: the gradual abolition of the slave trade and slavery in the global plantation belt and mining regions as well as imposition of colonizers' forced labor regimes in Asia and Africa; stepwise state-by-state ending of servitude in Europe; and migration of rural surplus populations into fertile regions (thinly) inhabited by other peoples and to industrial wage work in all segments of the globe. At the same time imperial penetration extended into China, Japan, and sub-Saharan Africa’s interior. With the expansion of rail networks from the 1830s and the introduction of steamships on transoceanic routes from the 1870s, mobility increased and transport costs plummeted. Products from the colonies, too, could be transported more cheaply, demand increased, and the plantation and extraction system relying on local forced and free migratory labor expanded.

Within this global frame, hemisphere-wide migrations systems emerged of men and women moving independently, in family units, or sequentially as families or siblings. Best-known is the Atlantic one, resuming after 1815, mainly to North America but including South America from the second half of the nineteenth century (55–58 million) and, in small numbers of almost exclusively men, to the European powers’ worldwide colonized realm (1 million). This included the forced migrations of enslaved African men and women, profitable to African slave-catching states, White trading and shipping interests, and White and Métis plantation owners, which involved about 2 million in the nineteenth century, ending in the 1870s. A second was the Indian Ocean–Southeast Asian–South China system developed from the 1830s, continuing earlier patterns but influenced by European colonizer interests. It extended to the Caribbean, Brazil, and – during World War I – to Europe (48–52 million). A third was a North China-to-Manchuria System from the 1880s, in which impoverished rural residents headed for agricultural and industrial frontier regions (c. 40 million). A fourth was the Russian–Siberian System, in which an estimated 10–12 million men and women moved
Major migration systems, 19th century to WWI and later

- **Black Atlantic** – catchment area, transoceanic passage, destination region for African slaves to the 1870’s
- **Transportation routes for force-migrated African slaves**
- **Asian indentured servants migrations**: areas of recruitment and deployment, 1830s–1930s
- **Asian indentured servants**: long-distance shipment routes
- **Borderline**: European Transatlantic settler and worker migrations, 1815–1914 and 1918–1955
- **European colonizer out-migration and return**
- **Migration from Europe’s periphery to industrializing core from mid-19th century**
- **Area of mass migration from Europe’s periphery to industrializing core**
- **Russo-Siberian migration system, 19th century to 1930s**
- **Core source of North China migration**
- **Migration from North China to Manchuria, 1880s to 1930s, 48–55 million**

Note: The European Transatlantic and North China systems, as well as the Indian Ocean system, involved about 50 million migrants each; the intra-European migrations were larger. All migrations included substantial numbers of women, rarely less than one third of the total.
east to southern Siberia’s fertile lands as far as the Amur River. In South America’s newly independent societies numerous regional patterns of migration developed. In North Africa from the 1830s and sub-Saharan Africa from the 1880s massive military colonization of European powers caused refugee movements, regional forced labor migrations, and other migrations in which individuals or families themselves made the decision to move. Earlier Eurocentric scholarship on migration has ignored some of these, however, such as the North China–Manchuria ones, and reduced others to racialized clichés, such as free (white) versus bound (brown and yellow) “coolie” migrations, or free transatlantic migrations versus absolutist bureaucracy-imposed Siberian exile.

Abolition of serfdom in Europe and of slavery in the Plantation Belt and the Americas should have increased self-directed mobility, but those emancipated in many cases had to compensate their former owners for the loss of property rather than being compensated for their unpaid labor. Resulting further impoverishment might force people to move, but new restraints might also impose further immobility. Where demand for labor remained high, official structural violence of new laws or private lynching violence regimes (as in the US South) prevented freed Black men and women from gaining liberty of movement. In other sections of the Plantation Belt, Haiti and Brazil for example, those liberated from bondage migrated to wage labor or to marginal regions where they engaged in independent subsistence farming. In Europe, liberated serfs escaped from extreme constraints, but they were not completely “free” migrants as their destination was often not self-willed.

In India, South China, and some South East Asian islands, indenture or “second slavery” bound men and women for five years. Reasons for indentures included individual shortcomings, poverty, and unfortunate circumstances, and also the new British – as well as Dutch and French – tax and labor impositions. Coercion to purchase food in plantation stores and employer refusal to pay return fare could result in forced re-indenture or permanent enslavement. All systems of bondage involved forced mobilization and, at the destination, forced immobilization. However, when the location of production changed, secondary forced migrations ensued, as with exhaustion of soils or shifts to new crops in the USA and Brazil.

Gender ideologies “bound” women and sometimes reduced their mobility. In China, for example, Confucian prescripts of women as dependent, even servant-like members of families severely restrained their options to migrate. The traditional equation of migrants with men, however, is as
wrong as the data collected by male-staffed state bureaucracies was. In nineteenth-century intra-European migrations about 50 percent of the migrants were women, and in the transatlantic ones 40 percent, although this varied by group and stage of a migration process. Under indentured servitude about 20–35 percent of the migrants were women. Without presence of women neither community formation nor inter-generational continuity was possible. Women often migrated (and migrate) to service positions, but rather than remaining in “their” sphere they crossed two borders: that between rural and urban lifeways and that between the laboring and employing classes. In some places gender systems actually increased women’s mobility in comparison with men’s. In Africa, for example, regional forms of rights-in-person dependency of debtors to creditors were feminized,

Figure 1.1 Plantation workers on arrival from India, mustered at Depot, c.1891
(Royal Commonwealth Society, London, UK / Bridgeman Images)

and mainly women and children migrated short-distance to serve or work for creditors.

Globally, with fast population growth, in all rural regions with family subsistence plots all but the first two surviving children had to out-migrate. Destinations involved (and involve) thinly settled rural areas (from New England to the Ohio Valley, from the Yangzi’s plains to ever steeper hillsides), labor markets in infra-structural, usually earth-moving tasks such as the building of canals, roads, railroads, and urban labor markets. At the peak of transatlantic emigration from the Habsburg Empire around 1910, 95 per cent of those leaving their land or small towns migrated internally, so absolute numbers and ratios have to be reconstructed from local vital records. Given the high mortality in all cities with poor sanitation systems, even maintenance of population levels depended on continuous in-migration. Ritual washing, prescribed in Islamic societies, improved public hygiene.

Traditionally, people in some rural regions generated non-agricultural income by gendered specialized craftwork in the home, such as cloth in most regions of the world, pottery in some regions of China and among West African Mande, cutlery in the German Palatinate, or lace in Swiss mountain valleys. Nineteenth-century concentration of production in manufactories and, subsequently, machine-driven ones, as well as railway-mediated import of mass-produced goods, reduced such local sources of income and forced single young men and women or whole families to depart. Studies of village as well as pastoral populations indicate high mobility and contradict the imagery of immobile countrysides. People were aware that urban agglomerations provided and provide more job and training options as well as recreational and marriage choices. From the 1880s to World War One, patterns of migration changed because of regionally specific job-providing industrialization and option-increasing urbanization.

The Atlantic migration system

While in the nineteenth century the world’s population grew by about 60 per cent, Europe’s doubled, which contributed to the development of an Atlantic migration system. Moves in this system, often called a “proletarian mass migration,” were proletarianizing ones for rural migrants from Eastern and Southern Europe: skilled agriculturalists became unskilled factory workers. Migration accelerated in Britain and Ireland under the concentration of landholding, early industrialization, and colonialism; in post-revolutionary continental Europe when the reactionary trans-European regime at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 re-imposed high taxes and tithes, rigorous social