

Why do they stay when they are not supposed to? Reconsidering the push-pull theory

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Studies on migration decisions tend to be mainly concerned with examining negative factors in the home country and positive factors in the destination country or countries. Drawing on Lee's original push-pull theory, the paper argues that this is only one side of the coin, and a broader analytical framework is needed, in which factors hindering migratory moves should be taken into account. Attractiveness of the home country, negative migration expectations, potential risks and hardships associated with international mobility can play an important role when considering migration. The authors stress that major migration theories also focus on why people move; therefore the fact that – even in the least developed countries – the vast majority of people choose not to migrate remain unexplained. Based on representative survey data (1464 respondents, aged between 18 and 40), the authors explore potential explanatory factors that can account for the lack of migration intention, as well as factors that may increase the likelihood of not even considering migration as a possibility. Explanatory variables include migration expectations, hardships and risks associated with migration and satisfaction with current life situation.