

Политическое управление эмиграцией из Бангладеша в рамках теории социальной сети

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Аннотация

Предмет настоящего исследования — теория социальных сетей для управления международной миграцией. Теория предполагает, что миграция из общества происхождения в принимающее общество может происходить, если существуют связи между этими двумя обществами, и что поток мигрантов проходит по линии установленных связей. Теоретический прогноз, который можно сделать, заключается в том, что если политическая администрация желает установить поток мигрантов между любыми двумя обществами, сначала необходимо установить связь между этими двумя обществами.

Теорию автор проверял на кейсе управления эмиграцией рабочих правительством Бангладеш. Обнаружено, что, во-первых, связи между обществом происхождения и принимающим обществом были созданы искусственно, однако, в отличие от теоретического прогноза, наблюдалось, что такие связи обычно не соответствуют географическому распределению максимальной близости к обществу происхождения или назначения. Вместо этого выявлено, что близость связи между двумя обществами порождается близостью между политическими администрациями одних и тех же обществ, что противоречит теоретическим ожиданиям. В связи с этим автор предложил расширить теорию международной миграции в социальной сети, предположив, что близость между двумя политическими администрациями, а не между двумя обществами в целом, является условием, необходимым для международной миграции. Это, в свою очередь, позволяет нам заполнить теоретический пробел, связанный с отношениями между теорией социальных сетей и управлением международной миграцией. Сделан вывод о том, что можно создавать любые миграционные потоки, формируя соответствующие связи между любыми двумя обществами.

Ключевые слова: Бангладеш, кадровые агентства, международная миграция, Министерство благосостояния и трудоустройства экспатриантов, политический менеджмент, политическое управление, теория социальных сетей, трудовая миграция

Для цитирования: Парвен Шаханаз. Политическое управление эмиграцией из Бангладеша в рамках теории социальной сети // Управление. 2020. Т. 8. № 4. С. 123–132. DOI: 10.26425/2309-3633-2020-8-4-123-132



Received: 01.09.2020

Revised: 13.10.2020

Accepted: 03.11.2020

Political management of emigration from Bangladesh in the framework of a social network theory

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Abstract

The subject of the study is the social network theory for the management of international migration. The theory suggests that migration from the society of origin to the hosting society can occur if links exist between these two societies, and that the flow of migrants follows the established links. The theoretical prediction which one can make is that, if the political administration wishes to establish a flow of migrants between any two societies, a link between these two societies must be established first.

The author tested the theory on the case of managing the emigration of workers by the government of Bangladesh. The paper found that, firstly, the links between the origin society and the host society were created artificially, however, in contrast to the theoretical forecast, the author observed that such links usually do not correspond to the geographical distribution of maximum proximity to origin or destination society. Instead, the study revealed, that the closeness of communication between two societies is generated by the proximity between political administrations of the same societies, which contradicts the theoretical expectations. In this regard, the author proposed to expand the theory of international migration in the social network, suggesting that the proximity between two political administrations, and not between two societies as a whole, is a condition necessary for international migration. This, in turn, allows us to fill a theoretical gap that is associated with the relationship between social network theory and the management of international migration. The paper concludes that it is possible to generate arbitrary migration flows, creating appropriate links between any two societies.

Keywords: Bangladesh, international migration, labour migration, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, political management, public administration, social network theory, recruitment agencies

For citation: Shahanaz Parven (2020). Political management of emigration from Bangladesh in the framework of a social network theory. *Upravlenie*, 8 (4), pp. 123–132. DOI: 10.26425/2309-3633-2020-8-4-123-132



Introduction: The problem of managing of international migration [Введение: проблема управления международной миграцией]

International migration is a social phenomenon which, by its own nature, is susceptible to escape the jurisdiction of any single government, leading to known socio-economic [Михайленко, 2019; Ott & Boonyarak, 2020] and security concerns [Adamson, 2006] on the parts of the public administrations involved. The literature on international migration suggests that governments can manage migration, and can also artificially increase or decrease it, by means of creating specialised institutions that operate at a national level, but also by means of international organisations competent by sector [Geiger & Péroud, 2010]. The problem with this approach, however, is that by considering the management of migration as if it were a phenomenon independent from the underlying society, one forgets the otherwise apparent reality that migration is a phenomenon that precedes the appearance of political institutions [Brettell & Hollifield, 2013]. This consideration therefore calls for the development of a socio-political theory on the management of international migration, which considers both the political, administrative aspects of it; but also, and more importantly, its fundamental social nature [O'Reilly, 2013]. This type of problem has been identified as a theoretical gap in the studies of migration, and therefore led to a call for the development of interdisciplinary approaches which would merge sociology, anthropology, economics, and political studies [Morawska, 2017]. This paper is therefore inserted in the theoretical approach to the study of migration which looks at interdisciplinary research as the desirable theoretical framework for studies on the phenomenon. The objective which we here propose is to fill the theoretical gap which relates to the emergence of macro-level networks of regional and international migrations [Bilecen et al, 2018], in order to explain why migration flows emerge between previously separated societies. This will be done by testing a naive interpretation of the social network theory

on migration for the specific case of the Bangladeshi labour emigration and, after verifying that a simple network approach does not suffice to explain the phenomenon, we will propose a theoretical development that includes politico-administrative management, and therefore of the role of policy and public administration, in creating otherwise missing social links between two societies. Within this context, we will show that public administration attempts to “steer rather than serve” the underlying social system with regards to migration [Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000], but also that, in doing so, it causes unintended consequences which prevent the administration’s declared objectives from being attained [Brettell, 2013; Dahler-Larsen, 2014].

Social network theory on international migration [Теория социальных сетей по международной миграции]

The most promising theory which uses interdisciplinarity as an underlying, foundational principle is the social network theory on migration [Waldorf, 1996], along with its extension to anthropology [Brettell & Hollifield, 2013]. The social network theory on international migration starts by imagining that a social network exists in the country of origin, and that another social network exists in the country of destination for any possible flow of migration (Fig. 1). In this sense the theory is simply an extension of the social network approach of social sciences [Krause et al, 2007] to the international level in general and to the sector of migration in particular.

The big darker circle on the Figure 1 describes the country of origin of a migratory flow, while the big lighter circle describes the country of destination. The smaller circles in the two big circles identify individuals, connected by social relationships, which constitute a local social network. On the left, the two social networks are disjointed, as no link between any two of their elements exists. On the right, the two social networks are connected, because there is an element, the circle, which is simultaneously connected to at least one individual from each social network. The theoretical prediction that can be made is that migration does not occur in the



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Fig. 1. Bridging social networks and thus favouring emigration

Рис. 1. Соединение социальных сетей и содействие таким образом эмиграции

system represented by the image to the left, while it occurs in the system represented by the image to the right.

The first theory would suggest that migration occurs where the links between two societies exist, but does not explain by itself the process through which such links are created. To do that we require the inclusion in our theoretical framework of the public administrations which operate on migration.

Political and administrative management of migration [Политико-административное управление миграцией]

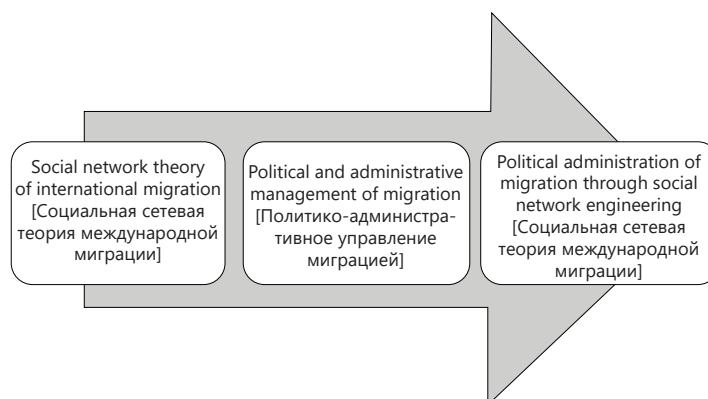
Public management, in general, is based on the theoretical assumption that it is possible to govern a social system by means of a specialised organisation which is embedded in it [Bovaird & Löffler E. (Eds), 2015]; this organisation is typically referred to as “government” or “public administration”. By starting with this assumption, it is subsequently possible to develop the concept of a “policy”, which indicates a strategy or a set of actions that the public administration undertakes in order to cause effects on the social system in which it is embedded [Dye, 1992]. If policies exist, it is then possible to study them for the purpose of understanding the modifications that such policies will determine on the underlying social system [John, 2013]. Policies can have the consequence of either changing the rules of social behaviour, which then allows them to be studied under the theoretical framework of (neo-)institutionalism [Radaelli et al, 2012], but can also have the consequence of changing the governmental structure alone or its behaviour, in what case they can be studied under the theory of public sector reform [Beh et al, 2018]. One particular type of public policy is the one which covers migration [Cebula & Nair-Reichert, 2012], which can in principle be analysed under both neo-institutionalism [Shrestha, 1987; Hollifield, 2004] and public sector reform [Noy & Voorend, 2016]. For our purposes, however, since we intend to understand the reasons behind the emergence of migration flows between societies, where previously there were none, and the way in which this phenomenon depends on decisions or behaviour of the public administration, the approach which we will follow is that of public sector reform. This approach has already been employed to study migration in the case of the Cook islands [Glassie, 2018] and rural China [Fields & Song, 2020], and it has also been applied for the study of internal migration and urbanisation in Bangladesh [Hossain, 2013]. Within the context of this theory, we therefore want to study the policies and reforms that an administration competent on migration assumes, and analyse its impact on the underlying migratory phenomenon. The last aspect of public sector reform with regards to migration that is worth mentioning is its

tendency to generate unintended consequences; that is, effects which deviate from the ones desired by the policy planner [Ghobadian, 2009]. These consequences tend to be particularly wicked, and as reported by the literature they tend to concern increased institutional barriers to legal migration [Massey & Pren, 2012], health hazards for the migrants [Cornelius, 2001], and the promotion of human trafficking [Warren, 2012] and workers’ exploitation [Craig et al (eds), 2015]. This leads to the idea that, while in practice governments attempt to manage migration, the theory which suggests that migration could in principle be effectively managed by governments without nasty side-effects is wrong [Guiraudon & Joppke, 2003].

Political management of migration through social network engineering [Политическое управление миграцией через социальную сетевую инженерию]

The social network approach and the theory on public management of migration can be merged (Fig. 2), in order to study how a public administration can affect migration by means of engineering the underlying social network on which migration occurs.

It has been proposed that a theory of functionalism could replace institutional theory for the study of migration policies [Boswell, 2007], and in here we apply a modification of the functionalist theory to study the specific problem of creating migration flows where previously there were none. This mixed theoretical approach has already been applied to the study of the emigration of Algerian citizens to the United Kingdom [Collyer, 2005], where it led to the consideration that familial ties alone cannot explain migration, in systems where political and economic considerations are taken into account. One theoretical justification of the inability of social network theory to explain migration alone, which thus justifies its further theoretical extension, is that the ego-network of the migrant is reshaped as migration takes place [Phithakkitnukoon et al, 2001], as a consequence of the fact that the migrant, through their relocation, destroys and creates new links more frequently than the general population [Sluzki, 1998]. This feature of the phenomenon of migration, that can be thus considered as having a character of intrinsic dynamic evolution, has long been known to the researchers [Gurak & Caces, 1992], and it has been suggested that the evolution of social networks towards higher forms of complexity is a consequence, rather than a cause, of migration of some of its elements [Stokman & Doreian, 1997]. This idea has also been partially supported by experiments on computer simulations [Barbosa Filho et al, 2011], and is gaining traction in recent times, with the suggestion that the social network itself moves by means



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Fig. 2. By leveraging the existing social networks, a political administration can promote migration by creating new connections between them

Рис. 2. Используя существующие социальные сети, политическая администрация может способствовать миграции, создавая новые связи между ними

of migratory flows, rather than migratory flows being the consequence of modification in the behaviour of social networks [Schapendonk, 2015]. For the purpose of our paper, we therefore imagine that the dynamic evolution of a social network, and in particular the creation of new links, can occur as a consequence of policies, or goal-oriented actions, of the public administration.

Political and administrative management of migration in Bangladesh [Политико-административное управление миграцией в Бангладеш]

The politico-administrative organisation in charge of adopting migration policies in Bangladesh is the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, which has been founded by the Emigration Ordinance, n. 29 of 1982¹, in the same decade in which other South Asian countries, and in particular India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, adopted analogous rules for the establishment of ministries that would promote the emigration of their national labour force [Kelegama (Ed.), 2011]. The ministry is in charge of supervising the migratory policies of the country, and to establish departments, subordinated to it, for the facilitation of migratory movements. The most important of such departments is the Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training (BMET), which was tasked with organising the pre-departure training of the prospected labour force [Islam, 2007]. This task was not achieved directly, but by means of a company called Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited [Abrar & Billah, 2016], which provides

the implementation of the migration policies, by means of the organisation of training activities and educational programs. In addition to these organisations, there is also a series of private recruitment agencies, which act as intermediaries between potential employers abroad and Bangladeshi prospected emigrants at home, and are of particular relevance for our research. These organisations are formally independent from the ministry, but de facto are required in order for the implementation of ministerial policies to take place. We believe that this formal independence might be a necessity, given the wicked nature of the emigration phenomenon, as was mentioned earlier [Azad, 2019; Joarder & Miller, 2014]. These recruitment agencies are, in the theoretical framework described above, the link which a government can create for the purpose of artificially connect two separated social networks, thus favouring emigration. The theoretical prediction which one could thus make is that such agencies would be located in close geographical proximity to the social network from which the migrant departs, or to which the migrant arrives, or both at the same time. This theoretical prediction would then suggest that the recruitment agencies be distributed across Bangladeshi cities roughly in the same proportion as the number of Bangladeshi workers that emigrate from them. There are in total 1188 recruitment agencies registered in the Bangladeshi Association of International Recruitment Agencies, which are distributed by city accordingly to the data indicated in the table below² (Table 1).

¹ Bangladesh Gazette, September 7, 1982. Dhaka, Bangladesh. Pp. 3129–3138. Available at: <https://bit.ly/31wywbS> (accessed 17.08.2020).

² BAIRA (2020) Data retrieved from the list of members of BAIRA. Available at: <https://www.baira.org.bd/extra/addresswithphoto.php> (accessed 17.08.2020).

Table 1

Distribution of international recruitment agencies in Bangladesh accordingly to their geographical location

City	Number of recruitment agencies
Dhaka	1149
Dhaka and Bogra	1
Bogra	1
Chittagong	24
Dhaka and Chittagong	8
Dhaka and Chapi Nawabganj	1
Dhaka and Sylhet	2
Dhaka and Feni	1
Kishoregonj	1
TOTAL	1188

Source: [BAIRA, 2020]

Табл. 1. Распределение международных кадровых агентств в Бангладеш в соответствии с их географическим местоположением

Город	Количество кадровых агентств
Дакка	1149
Дакка и Богра	1
Богра	1
Читтагонг	24
Дакка и Читтагонг	8
Дакка и Чапай-Навабгандж	1
Дакка и Силхет	2
Дакка и Фени	1
Кишоргандж	1
Всего	1188

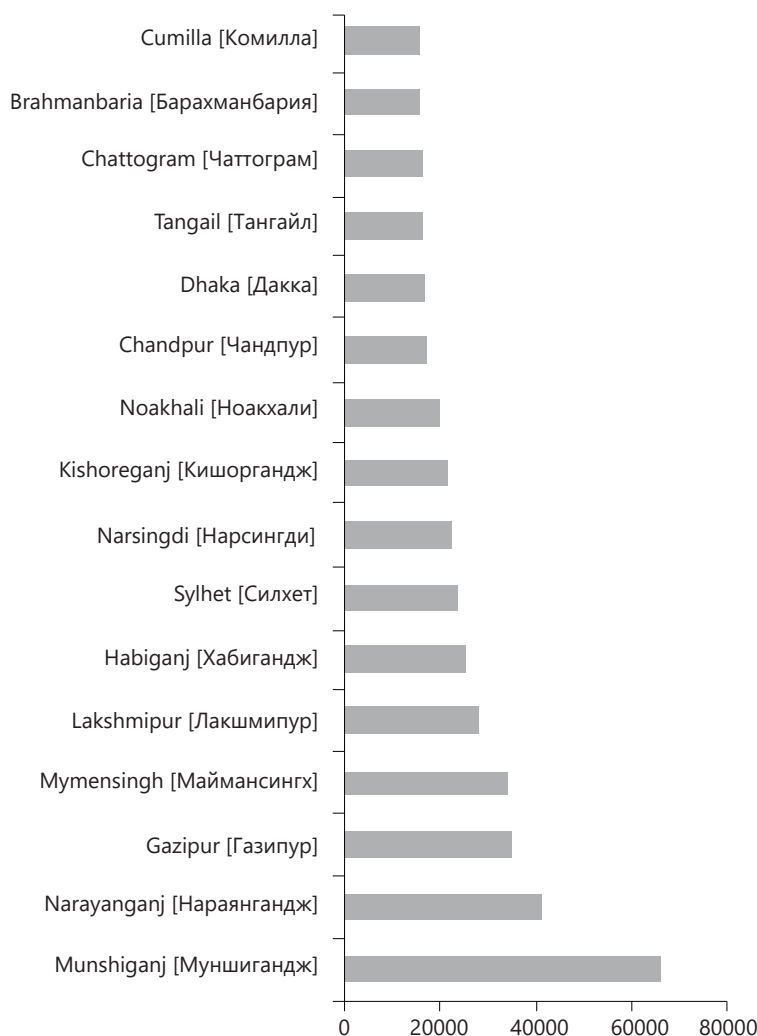
Источник: [BAIRA, 2020]

The theoretical prediction would therefore suggest that the largest portion of the emigrants originates from Dhaka, followed by Chittagong. This is in fact required, if the agency which acts as a link between the country of origin and the country of destination is a component of the social network of the prospected migrant, and therefore its location on the network causes emigration. We can therefore compare the table above with the figures related to the city of origin of Bangladeshi emigrants who, as of 2019, are currently employed abroad³ (Fig. 2).

It can be seen how the relationship between the numbers contained in Table 1 and those in Figure 2 are low or very low. The cities with the most emigrants are Cumilla, Brahmanbaria, Chattogram (Chittagong), and Tangali, and only in Chittagong recruitment agencies are present. Cumilla and Brahmanbaria are located in the division of Chittagong, though, and it is in principle

possible that the migrants from those cities are connected to the recruitment agencies in Chittagong. This still does not explain the largest prevalence of emigrants from the area around Chittagong, which is supposed to come second in the distribution, if indeed recruitment agencies are the links through which migration flows are established. Migration from Dhaka, on the other hand, figures in the distribution immediately after the four cities enumerated above, and does indeed possess the highest number of recruitment agencies also. We however believe that the large number of emigrants from Dhaka is a reflection of the vastly larger population that the city possesses with comparison to all others, and that this is therefore scarcely representative of a possible role that recruitment agencies might have in the favouring of migration. The comparison between the geographical distribution of recruitment agencies, which are de facto, if not formally, managerial tools for migration by the public administration, and the distribution of Bangladeshi emigrants accordingly to the city of origin, seems to suggest that there is no relationship between the two.

³ BMET (2020) District wise overseas employment in 2019. Available at: www.old.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/viewStatReport.action?reportnumber=21 (accessed 17.08.2020).



Source [Источник]: [BMET, 2020]

Fig. 3. Number of Bangladeshi emigrants currently working abroad as of 2019, grouped by city of origin.
Cities with more than 15 000 emigrated labourers

Рис. 3. Численность бангладешских эмигрантов, работающих в настоящее время за границей, по состоянию на 2019 г., сгруппированная по городам происхождения (города с более чем 15 000 эмигрировавших рабочих)

This, in turn, seems to suggest that the social network theory alone is insufficient to explain the specific migration pattern observed for the Bangladeshi emigration, and that therefore it is not generally valid. We can however note how recruitment agencies are located in close proximity not as much to the labour force which they target, but rather to the ministerial agencies from which they depend. This seems to suggest that a strong public management of migration takes place in Bangladesh, and that therefore a better explanation, rather than social network theory, is required. We propose, as anticipated above, that the links established by means of creation of recruitment agencies enable the connection not of societies as a whole, but of public administrations in particular.

Conclusions. Social network theory is not sufficient to explain international migration
[Закключение: теория социальных сетей не достаточна для объяснения международной миграции]

In this paper we have studied the relationship between the social network theory on migration, and the theory on public management of international migration. We identified a theoretical gap in the literature on the phenomenon of international migration, which relates to the inability by social network theory, alone, and by public management theory, alone, to explain why migration occurs between two initially separated societies. We have then tested social network theory in order to determine

whether it could, alone, explain the emigration patterns of the Bangladeshi labour force. We have observed that this is not the case, and that therefore the theory is falsified at least for the case being studied. We therefore propose that the theory of social networks for international migration cannot correctly describe a world in which governments and centralised public policies for the management of migration exists. Instead we suggest that the

establishment of migration flows follows not as much the direct connections between social systems, but rather the connections between national public administrations of the country of origin and country of destination of migratory flows. This theoretical explanation is consistent with the literature on the public management of international migration, which is therefore confirmed.

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