1.1 INTRODUCTION

The main thesis of this study is that migration is an integral component of the major processes of structural change in a country. As such, migration should not be studied in isolation from the historical and evolving patterns of development of the country. In their specific forms and magnitudes, migration processes are patterned movements of human populations within and between territorial units. The important point to stress here is that these movements are a response to, and at the same time, conditions the economic and social forces which affect significant sections of a community.

In taking this approach, a structural analysis of migration is different from the usual approach of seeking causes of migration in individualistic terms as a starting point in the explanatory framework. It is not enough to ask migrants their reasons for leaving a place or choosing another, themselves fraught with the psychological complexities associated with the motivation for migration. Similarly, it is not enough to describe the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the migrants prior to, and after migration. A structural approach must also go beyond the enumeration of "pull" and "push" factors involving a rudimentary characterization of origin and destination areas, for such studies only lead to a theoretical dead-end with limited explanatory value. Evidence of this cul-de-sac is the voluminous amount of repetitive writings on this subject with little headway made into a more universal framework and theory of migration.

On the contrary, a more meaningful disposition towards the analysis of migration, from both a theoretical and policy point of view, must begin from a consideration of the economic, political and social structures of the society. Individual responses and characteristics of migrants must be analyzed as consequences of these structures. In this way, migration analysis becomes historical analysis in the sense that the structured patterns of movements represent fundamental responses over extended periods of time and conditioned by societal processes. These processes may be marginally or significantly changed by state policies, depending on the articulation of external and internal factors affecting that society.

This dissertation takes Peninsular Malaysia as a specific case study to demonstrate the above thesis. It is argued that migration in Peninsular Malaysia occurs within a structured pattern. This structured pattern is a product of its colonial past which in turn shaped its
economy and the particular racial mix of its population. The consequent underdevelopment of the indigenous population, the Malays, as evidenced in their poverty, rural location and occupations called for certain government policies after Independence in 1957, and especially after 1970, to reduce these imbalances. Associated with this type of development, of being mostly primary product-oriented, is a dependent economy, very open and therefore, exposed to the vicissitudes of world economic cycles. To minimize the impact of the world’s fluctuating demands on commodities, particularly emphasized during the recession of the mid-1980s, concerted efforts were made by the government to diversify Malaysia’s economy through industrialization. Structural adjustment measures such as deregulation were undertaken to make the economy more resilient to external shocks. All these measures led to a successful and dramatic recovery by the late 1980s. Such forces had a very powerful effect on the migration patterns and processes of the country.

Except for McGee’s work (1969, 1971) and to a lesser extent Pryor’s research (1972) and, ESCAP’s (1982) and Standing’s (1983), there has been little attempt to examine migration and urbanization in Malaysia within a broader developmental context, integrating historical and contemporary economic and political factors. There has certainly been no migration study that has both the historical approach and the contemporary forces analyzed within a multi-level framework of analysis, from the broadest and highest level, the international, to that of the family and individual, seen as the lowest and most detailed level. Such a framework gives more than a context or background to the analysis of migration processes; it attempts to link the determinants at the world, national, regional, village and finally, family and individual levels. Thus, migration is not explained as a purely individualistic response, but one that is conditioned by various forces at different levels.

In this chapter, we will first examine in Section 1.2 three models of migration which have attempted in different ways, to view migration within the broad framework aimed at above. However, these models for various reasons, will prove to be inadequate, for the above purpose. This section concludes with an outline of a methodological framework which may point to more fruitful directions of research. In Section 1.3 we will review migration studies in Malaysia, highlighting their relative contributions and existing gaps in the present knowledge of this subject. The next section discusses the vital role of migration in Malaysia’s national planning, especially in fulfilling the targets of the New Economic Policy (NEP). The research objectives and methodology are more clearly spelt out in Section 1.4, concluding with an outline of the dissertation in Section 1.5.
1.2 MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW

1.2.1 Models of Migration and Development

Three models, namely, the Lewis-Fei-Ranis dualistic economy model, the Harris-Todaro two-sector model and Zelinsky’s Mobility Transition model, have been selected for discussion as they have had a significant influence in studies on the relationship between migration and development. But all suffer from some severe limitations. Each will be discussed briefly in this section.

Migration is an important process to consider in the study of economic development because geographical mobility tends to be associated with sectoral changes in industry and occupations. This inter-sectoral mobility, of movement from predominantly agricultural pursuits to manufacturing which occurs with rural-urban migration, is believed to be central to the transformation of a country’s economic structure (Hoselitz, 1953; Davis, 1965). The main point of the Lewis-Fei-Ranis two-sector model is that surplus labour released from traditional agriculture will be absorbed into the modern industrial and tertiary sectors in urban areas (Lewis, 1954; Fei and Ranis, 1964; 1971). This transfer of labour, with the spatial element implied, is assumed to take place at zero cost in terms of both transport and loss of agricultural productivity, and is limited only by the institutional rigidity of subsistence real wages in the urban sector.

The greatest weakness of this model is the assumption that the development pattern of Third World countries will be similar to that of developed countries. It assumes that rural labour surplus will be automatically absorbed in urban areas. It does not consider that the experience of many Third World countries may be different owing to their colonial legacies and the impact of peripheral capitalism and the international division of labour. Thus, the model does not anticipate the problems of mass unemployment in Third World urban cities (see Turnham, 1971) nor the economic development of the rural populace through modernization of agriculture, as in the rural land development schemes of Malaysia (see MacAndrews, 1976; Pava and Shamsol, 1984) and rural urbanization where certain industries are relocated to rural areas to hold back potential rural-urban migration, at the same time providing the necessary urban infrastructure (Young and Kamal, 1985).

The Harris-Todaro model (1970) arose out of the inability of the Lewis-Fei-Ranis model to explain the paradoxical situation of substantial rural migration to urban centres

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1 Originally derived by Todaro (1969) with subsequent refinements of the model by Johnson (1971); Bhagwati and Srinivasan (1974); Fields (1975), and Thadath and Todaro (1978).
despite rising levels of urban unemployment and underemployment. This model postulates that the potential migrant's decisions are made according to rational economic reasons. He migrates in response to urban-rural differences in "expected" rather than "actual" earnings and the probabilities of gaining employment in the urban sector. The decision to migrate is represented on the basis of a "permanent income" calculation.

Although the concept of the rational man is questionable (but remains the basis of most economic models where man is a principal actor), Todaro has attempted to explain the burgeoning unemployed in Third World cities with persisting rural-urban migration (which is certainly not rational at face value). He has reduced the macro-picture of the Lewis-Fei-Ranis model to that of the individual, where the decision-making process is based on the individual's own perspective. In the potential migrant's calculation to migrate, a dynamic element has been incorporated into the equation — for the longer the migrant stays in the urban area, the more likely he is to get a job owing to better access to information and contacts. This conceptualization enables the model to postulate the existence of an expanding sector of urban unemployment, which includes in the usual statistical sense those seeking a job, constrained in a structural sense by the wage differential between urban and rural areas.

However, there are at least three assumptions in this model which makes it difficult to apply in Malaysia and other more complex Third World economies. First, the urban sector is assumed to be homogeneous. This ignores the complexities of the urban sector as evidenced in the different levels of capital and technology, foreign and domestic firms, and public and private sectors (see for example, Friedmann and Sullivan, 1974). This oversimplification may cause major problems in the application of the model in many parts of Asia where there are more complex employment patterns in urban areas, compared with the East African situation from which this model has been derived. For example, in Malaysia, not only is the labour market segmented by sex as in most countries, but the state-sponsored preferential employment of Malays has distorted the employment structure, further entrenching the already ethnically stratified occupational and industrial structures (Hirschman, 1972; Rais, 1973; Tham, 1977; Young, 1981b).

The second unsatisfactory notion of the Harris-Todaro model is the assumption that the rural sector is homogeneous. In reality, the rural sector consists of various communities stratified by institutional factors, such as class, ethnicity and kinship which vary in importance from country to country. Migrants are drawn from different strata of rural communities in different cultures (Amin, 1974: 91; Connell et al., 1976: 2; Hirschma, 1977). In Malaysia, Malay and Chinese rural migrants not only come from different socioeconomic backgrounds but leave for different types of work. The case study in Malaysia
will show how diverse the urban and rural sectors are and how job placement is influenced by cultural, institutional and political factors.

The third problem of the model is the over-simplified decision-making process imputed of migrants. The model implies that people migrate solely for one reason -- that of increasing their expected incomes. In fact, people migrate for numerous reasons. Even the “push-pull” concept which incorporates more than one reason for migration has been criticized for its simplistic dichotomy (Jackson, 1969: 3). Speare (1969) found that the cost of moving was a more important determinant of migration than expected income rise among Thai-Kung migrants. Even if one accepts that income expectations is a major factor, research has shown that income differences have varying effects on different groups (Shoata, 1968; Schultz, 1971). This study will show that the reasons for migration are very complex and depends very much on the scale and level of analysis. A micro-level study from the rural and source end, covering all people who migrate will show that family reasons such as marriage and passive migration, as well as education rank as the most important causes. Selecting young migrants in the urban destination end will highlight economic factors because one is dealing with a specific group. Again, examining in greater depth the migrant’s family structure within a household approach will indicate the importance of family-structure-type factors, such as rank in the family, etc. The point to emphasize here is that the decision to migrate is highly dependent on the type of population under study and the level of that analysis.

There are also problems associated with the measurement of the central variables (see Yap, 1977). It is well-known that stated reasons for migration are affected by rationalization and memory lapses (see Pryor, 1975b; De Jong and Gardner, 1981). In fact, even the interviewer can easily affect the response of the migrant being interviewed. The problem of measurement is further aggravated when the data collection is not designed to collect information specifically on the motivation of migration. Besides, expected incomes perceived by potential migrants are difficult to measure (Speare, 1969). It is also doubtful that the use of wages is very meaningful in many Third World contexts where household earnings within the household economy may be more relevant (Hart, 1974: 332-3; Connell et al., 1976: 30).

The third model which relates migration to development is the Mobility Transition Hypothesis (Zelinsky, 1971). A different type of model from that of Lewis-Fei-Ranis and Harris-Todaro, Zelinsky (1971: 221-2), a geographer, hypothesized that:

"there are definite, patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space-time during recent history, and these regularities comprise an essential component of the modernization process".  

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The five-stage mobility transition closely parallels the demographic transition. Population circulation, internal and international migration vary according to the level of development in the country, progressing from a period of little genuine residential migration to one dominated by inter- and intra-urban migration.

The Zelinsky hypothesis is a contribution to migration theory for it is the first attempt to relate migration behaviour within both space and time dimensions. However, while the model may be applicable in developed countries (see Rowland, 1975) it may be less relevant to Third World countries. Like the Lewis-Fei-Ranis model, the Mobility Transition Hypothesis assumes a uni-directional path of development for all countries, irrespective of their historical experiences. The model does not account for colonialism which has dramatically affected migration and consequently, populations. For example, it does not explain the labour mobility to plantation and mining sectors so characteristic of Sub-Saharan Africa (see for example, Mitchell, 1969; Amin, 1974; Magubane, 1975) and Papua New Guinea (Cartaz, 1981; Young, 1977).

The data sources employed by Zelinsky to support the Mobility Transition Hypothesis reveal several weaknesses. The first problem is the nature of the data used. As Zelinsky drew widely from migration research based on census data to illustrate his hypothesis, the patterns were subjected to census-data-type errors. The data were mainly lifetime migration which were cross-sectional and aggregative. Lifetime migration does not account for intervening moves while the statistical units employed varied in size between nations. The second problem is that of actual data collection. Censuses are not exclusively designed to elicit migration information. Consequently, they fail to identify among other mobility issues, short-term, repetitive moves. It was really surveys, including ethnological methodologies designed for studying population mobility that have detected massive evidence of circular migration in Third World countries (see for example, Elkan, 1967; Breman, 1977; Hugo, 1978; Young, 1982; Standing, 1985; Prothero and Chapman, 1985 for reviews). It is clear that the importance of this type of movement has been underestimated in Zelinsky’s model.

These three models have contributed to the knowledge of migration and its relationship with development. However, they tend to be ahistorical and imply that the path of development is the same for all Third World countries and will at least resemble that experienced by the developed countries. The uneven impact and legacy of colonialism from the fifteenth to nineteenth century, and international capitalism as manifested today within the new international division of labour suggests the importance not only of changing global economic conditions but the changing internal social forces, such as the role of the state, in mediating internal economic and political problems (Kamal and Young,
How these countries respond to the interplay of external and internal forces are reflected in their path of development, for example, the newly industrialized countries (NICs) of Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore, aptly named the “four little dragons”, in extreme contrast to the economically depressed Sub-Saharan states. It is argued here that the impact of historical forces, such as colonialism and the position of Malaysia in the current international division of labour, mediated through the state cannot be ignored in the study of migration. The large primary export sector and a plural society are both legacies of colonialism. The country is dependent and open, and the society divided racially, being economically and geographically stratified. The government, after the racial riots of 1969, was forced to take radical action in eradicating these differences through the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970. As part of the diverse package of remedial measures, rural development was stepped up and urban job creation expanded not only through the government but through export platform industries. A meaningful study of migration must understand the complexities of these interrelationships, historical and contemporary, and how they affect, and in turn, are conditioned by migration.

In short, a more adequate model which relates migration to development requires a theory of development of the Third World, to be applied in specific ways to the particular historical and contemporary role and structure of the national economy being studied within that context. Such a universal theory and model of Third World underdevelopment is not yet forthcoming and may well be impossible (see Forster-Carter, 1978; Mouzelis, 1980). Without going into the vast and conflicting literature, we should now explore some dimensions of a structural framework for analyzing migration and development.

1.2.2 Towards a Research Framework for Migration Analysis

A research framework for a structural analysis of migration must incorporate two tasks. First, it must be able to identify the structural processes which determine a country’s developmental trajectory. This must be analyzed within the context of a meaningful periodization of that society’s historical transformation. Second, it must be able to locate migration processes within this unfolding structure and periodization.

The first of these tasks involves a specification of the national model of development. The formulation of this model must go beyond the question of a country’s development in terms of its position on a linear universal scale of economic and social modernization, and the imitative model of development this implies. The specification of a country’s development model should recognize that national economies exist as integral parts of an increasingly inter-dependent world economic system, each playing a historically defined
role in the development of the system. Therefore, they become structured in particular ways depending on the articulation of internal and external factors.

Dependency theory represents the first real critique of the conventional development theory namely, modernization theory and its subsequent revision by the dual economy model which had formed the basis of the three models of migration discussed earlier. The dependency model absorbed later into the more articulate world systems model, in its barest essentials, sees the underdevelopment of Third World economies as a direct product of the development of unequal trade relations and the flow of economic surplus from investment capital which benefited the advanced countries more than the "peripheral" economies. These unequal relations at the world level, in turn, through specialization of the role of the peripheral countries, created economic and social structures within these countries which blocked their transition to the form of development achieved by the advanced countries. There are many versions of this centre-periphery model of development of the world system, and the mechanisms through which the surplus of peripheral economies are continuously drained off, and of the implications of this process on the development of internal structures (see Amin, 1976; Wallerstein, 1979). These formulations of the world systems are themselves not without controversy, and numerous critiques are available showing the weaknesses of these original contributions and providing new theoretical directions (see Henderson and Castells, 1987). Among issues which are the subject of this underdevelopment literature are included the question of imperialism, the role of multinational corporations (MNCs) in the present world conjuncture, the nature of the world economic crisis, problems of industrialization of the Third World, the question of class formation, the role of the state and politics and more recently, urban development (for reviews see Brenner, 1977; Leys, 1977; Brewer, 1980; and Henderson, 1986).

The differences are due mainly to the particular social science bias of the author, for example, the political-economy bent of Baran (1957) and Frank (1969), the economic approach of Sweezy (1942) and Amin (1974, 1976), and the sociological contributions of Alavi (1972), Cardoso (1973), and Wallerstein (1974). There are also criticisms of, and inconsistencies within each author's model of the world system as well as inconsistencies between these various versions (Brewer, 1980; Henderson, 1989).

However, a more meaningful explanation of the development of the world economy and its impact on national economies can be achieved through the incorporation of the more general aspects of these different contributions. In particular, Wallerstein's world systems

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1 For an introduction to how a vast literature, see for instance, Frank (1969).
approach, while highly abstract, proffers the possibility of analyzing the formation of particular societies in terms of the timing and manner of its incorporation into the world economy. It is also able to accommodate the possibility of genuine growth and industrialization of some countries in the Third World, or the periphery, through graduation to the category of the semi-periphery, occurring at particular historical points according to the cycles and rhythms of development of the world economy. This is in contrast to the dependency theory which dooms the periphery to a permanent underdeveloped state. What may trigger this transition in certain territories, and not everywhere, is the role of the nation state in promoting such development and the availability of conducive factors such as labour, and other locational advantage. The development of the East Asian NICs, in particular, is evidence of this.

The possibility of Third World industrialization in the present period of development of the world economy was induced by a process of global restructuring described by another world system formulation called the new international division of labour (NIDL) theory (Falloix, 1977; Frobel et al., 1980). The new in the NIDL is the export of manufacturing production which previously was concentrated in the core industrialized countries under the colonial or core-periphery division of labour. This globalization of industrial production is organized through transnational corporations (TNCs) to escape the high costs of labour in the advanced industrialized nations. The availability of cheap labour, the technical division of labour that allows for the spatial separation of different phases of the production process (from product design to fabrication of components, assembly, testing, and marketing), and the investment policies of some Third World states, enabled the formation of industrial zones in the periphery. Further development of these enclaves and later integration through the labour process and supporting industries could lead to economy-wide industrial development as attested to by the NICs.

What is important in these models of development of the world economy to the study of internal migration is the unifying framework they provide to the diverse economic, social and political processes which influence the migration phenomenon in particular countries. Rural-urban migration, for instance, reflects a similar response of labour to the one-way flow of economic surplus resulting from the exploitation of rural areas and smaller cities by the national metropolis (Portes, 1977: 8). Such a formulation of the migration response, however, also suffers like the dependency model on which it is based, from oversimplification. For one, it leads to a conception of origin and destination areas as independent entities rather than related within the national and international system. It also gives a rather static picture of the migration process, without explaining how existing conditions change, and how migration flows can occur in diverse patterns of flows in response to these changing conditions in origin and destination areas. The dependency
paradigm also fails to provide a robust enough basis for the description and exploration of geographical displacements of labour in the process of societal transformation. As Portes (1977: 9) says in proposing the world systems approach as an example of such an alternative:

"labour migration, like related exchanges, does not occur as an external process between independent entities but as part of the internal dynamics of the same unit. [The international capitalist system] is constantly changing according to forces that allow its components to modify their relative positions without significantly altering the basic order".

The world systems approach applies well for international labour migration and to a certain extent, domestic migration (Young and Kamal, 1985). However, if it were to avoid the fallacy of transitivity, which the dependency school is accused of, that of applying international level processes directly to the national level, the world systems framework must consider more fully the role of mediating national factors on internal migration. The point of the world systems approach, however, should not be lost: that is, that national level processes must be interpreted within the context of the development of the world as a whole. It follows logically that the analysis of concrete national development experiences has to be historically specific as well.

The NIDL within the context of global restructuring, in which Malaysia is now integrated with, provides one part of the research framework at this level of analysis of internal migration, particularly relevant during the post-1970 phase. More specifically, the rapid export-led industrialization experienced by Malaysia in the 1970s and 1980s, which had such profound effects on migration, as will be shown in this thesis, is a product of this global restructuring, in conjunction with the implementation of the NEP.

This brings us to the second task of developing our research framework; that of situating migration processes within this national developmental model. Still macro in scale, the specification of migration phenomena here must be conducted at four levels. The first level is the analysis of migration streams and relating these to national developmental processes, some of which are influenced by international forces. To do this, particular cognizance must be taken of the sectoral characteristics of these migration streams as they reflect the processes of national economic transformation. The structure of these streams should be related to changes over the different historical periods of economic development of the society, including the underlying social conditions and the policies of the state in response to changing internal and international conditions.
The second level of analysis, best described as meso-level, examines the transformation of particular areas, either as regions of origin or as regions of destination. Such an examination incorporates a dynamic view of the relations between these areas, the role they play within the national territory, and the impact of international and national forces on these areas. It is through such an approach that in studying the regions of origin we may discover the underlying explanations for the persistence of lagging regions, in spite of migration. Similarly, an enumeration of the population of the areas as total mobility and migration groups, of not only outmigrants (which is usually the subject of study but analyzed in isolation from the other mobility groups) but of stayers, intending migrants and commuters will throw further light on the nature and implications of such movements. By the same token, the analysis of rural-urban migration in the destination-end should be studied through a more disaggregated characterization of the urban economy in peripheral national economies.

This leads to the third level which is best discussed in terms of the urban informal sector concept. As argued earlier, the conceptualization of urbanization processes in Third World countries implied by the Lewis-Fei-Ranis and the Harris-Todaro models of migration is inadequate. It is to overcome these shortcomings that McGee and Armstrong (1968) devised the concept of “urban involution” and Flatt (1973) formulated the “formal” and “informal” sectors based on the sources of income and income opportunities. The literature on the informal sector is now quite extensive with diverse case studies from most Third World countries (see for example, Portes et al., 1989) and is well summarized by McGee (1978) and Kamal (1981). There are two contending schools of thought.

The neo-dualist school, a development from Lewis-Fei-Ranis sees the urban economy as two sectors. These two sectors may be defined as two types of economy, a “firm-centred” and a “bazaar-type” (Geertz, 1963); as two systems of production, capitalist versus peasant modes of production (Franklin, 1965; McGee, 1974); as two-circuits, an upper- and a lower-circuit (Santos, 1976); and as two labour markets, a “protected” formal sector and an “unprotected” informal sector (Mazumdar, 1976).

According to this view, structural imbalances in the economy cause problems of labour absorption in the formal sector. Therefore, the informal sector is seen as a vital and dynamic sector capable of providing employment and income opportunities for the increasing numbers of rural-urban migrants. This is contrasted to the earlier held linear developmental thesis which regarded the informal sector as parasitic on the formal

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counterpart, eventually disappearing with modernization of the entire economy through its absorption into the formal sector. The contemporary view is that the activities of the informal sector, while existing in the interstices of the modern urban economy and considered low in unit productivity, nevertheless contribute much in volume to economic growth.

A major criticism of the neo-dualist school is by the dependency school which believes that the relationship between the informal and formal sectors is not symbiotic. Instead, the level of capital accumulation possible by the informal sector is hampered by the structural factors in the socio-economic political system. These small-scale activities can only participate in economic growth in a dependent way in urban sectors of countries with external-oriented economies (Moser, 1978: 1025). Therefore, the relations of production, accumulation and distribution in the informal sector is subordinated to the formal sector (Bienefeld, 1975). This complex production relations reflect a highly fragmented labour market in the urban economy differentiated by heterogeneous classes (Breman, 1976).

The importance of the informal sector in a structural analysis of migration is clear. Besides offering a more meaningful characterization of the Third World urban economy, it allows for the analysis of migration as a phenomenon of the structure of the labour market. In this way, forms of mobility and migration (in particular, circular and return migration), as much as the nature of their absorption into the urban formal or informal sectors through rural-urban migration, can be seen as particular responses and adaptations of displaced labour within persistent structures of underdevelopment. The tendency for certain ethnic groups and sex to gravitate towards certain occupations and industries is also a product of the fragmented labour market. The specification of these responses in particular situations, differing according to the development experience of a country, is part of the second level of analysis.

A fourth level of analysis, the micro-level goes down to the family and individual levels. It involves the study of the decision to migrate in terms of family-demographic structures rather than as simple individual’s decision to migrate which does not take into account the household of which he is a part. The basic premise here is that the individual is an important element of the household which itself responds to outside socio-economic and political forces which may be national and international. A whole body of literature on household structures and processes and their links with the broader national and international forces have been developed. Harvey (1978a) has aptly labelled these different processes as personal time (in one’s life-history), family time (within the family life-cycle) and industrial time (the socio-economic and political factors impinging on the individual’s life through the household). The integration of all these provide the essential
linking of the micro- and macro-levels where the macro is not merely a background for the micro. Thus, the household and the individuals in it, and their inter-play of relations become a microcosm of outside forces.

1.3 MIGRATION RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

1.3.1 Migration Research in Peninsular Malaysia

Migration research on internal migration in Peninsular Malaysia has been mainly macro-oriented, based on large surveys in urban areas. Pryor (1972) examined internal migration in the broader development context of the country, using a number of data sources, including a survey of migrants in urban and rural areas of Selangor to gain some insights into economic development and modernization processes. He (1972: 625-30) concluded that Peninsular Malaysia, a more developed nation than most of its neighbours in Southeast Asia, is in the later stages of Phase II of Zelinsky's Mobility Transition (see Zelinsky, 1971). Although Sureah's (1975) study of urban migrant labour absorption into metropolitan Selangor was derived partially from a sample survey, he used mainly census data. The major conclusion was that labour absorption was more efficient (in the sense that those seeking a job finds one) than in other developing countries, although migrant participation in the modern sector was low. Soor (1976) attempted to explain interstate migration flows and characteristics within a regression framework derived from census data. Without recourse to more detailed survey data more questions were raised than answered.

The later studies which used census data and covered national patterns were the series of country studies by ESCAP (1982) and Standing (1983). Both paid some attention to historical aspects of urbanization but were similar to the conventional type studies in that a large proportion of the report was devoted to interstate migration patterns (especially between 1970 and 1980), and inevitably, the characteristics of migrants. No good study on migration in Malaysia can ignore the role of the government in the redistribution of population especially after 1970. Both discussed these issues. But what was interesting in the Standing (1983) report which was more problem-oriented, was the use of survey data of immigrants to the Federal Territory (Kuala Lumpur and environs) and Petaling Jaya. However, it slips back into the usual comparison of migrants and non-migrants. The same type of analysis was carried out by Mazumdar (1981) in his study of the Malaysian urban labour market. Again, concentrating solely on urban destination areas of the Klang Valley, Malacca and Johor Bahru, the study by Tey (1988) deals with migrant and non-migrant differences in demographic economic characteristics, with an added dimension, that of
occupational mobility. Finally, the most recent survey by the Department of Statistics (Malaysia, Department of Statistics, 1990) of migrants between 1987-88 covered the whole peninsula, but again focused on the interstate volume and pattern of migration and the characteristics of migrants with non-migrants.

While these studies have increased the knowledge of interstate flows, characteristics of migrants, distance travelled by migrants, cost and means of transport during migration, choice of destination and home ties, information on the complex decision-making processes and the motivation for migration data were gathered on a fairly general basis. Owing to the scale of the surveys, time and logistical constraints precluded in-depth communication with the respondents. With the exception of the Tey (1988) study which incorporated some life history data, the rest were basically large cross-sectional type studies undertaken at the destination-end.

Other macro-scale migration studies have been equally problem-oriented. MacAndrews (1976) studied the extent of rural modernisation among FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) migrants in two land development schemes. Using occupational mobility as one of the indicators of modernisation, he (1976: 34) concluded that given certain conditions, fully integrated land development schemes were an effective means of rural modernisation. A study was commissioned to determine the socio-economic characteristics of potential migrants for the Pahang-Tenggara land projects (Kaplan et al., 1977). Two studies, of Negri Sembilan (Selvaratnam and Dissanayake, 1976) and Johor-Tenggara (Cheong et al., 1976) examined the role of migration as one of the variables in the analysis of regional development. On a smaller scale, Khoo and Voon (1974) studied migration from a New Village in Pahang. This study did not exploit the conceptual and methodological advantages of working on a micro-level at the source-end.

One striking fact of published articles of the 1980s on migration is that a large proportion were on planned population redistribution, specifically that of land settlement schemes such as FELDA (Blair and Noor, 1981; Laquian, 1982; Paiva and Shahnaj, 1984; Khoo, 1984; Ogawa and Chan, 1985; Oberai, 1986; and Nazli et al., 1990). Most cover the same grounds, that of the reasons and objectives for these land development schemes, their government sponsorship, and role in rural development; highlighting the same issues, particularly those that describe how FELDA functions, and how it is administered, the performance of these schemes including the question of cost-benefit; and the host of problems faced by such schemes including the retention of settlers, the second generation problem, land concentration and social tensions between settlers and the local people, and finally, an assessment of its success, i.e. FELDA’s ability to meet its objectives and in some cases quoting the same data from the FELDA reports.
However, one publication with a somewhat different bent is how agricultural development policies have affected inter-district migration (Nazli et al., 1990). What is interesting here is the use of the Malaysian Family Life Survey, 1976-77 consisting of life-history data and matrices. It concluded that the existence of land development schemes reduces outmigration and increasing the acreage under agricultural development has had positive effects on outmigration from the district.

The only two studies which could be considered micro-scale and in-depth in approach (although varying very much in scope) again focused on the urban destination-end and on one ethnic group—the Malays. McGee's (1969) intensive research was on Malay migrants in Kuala Lumpur Municipality between 1962-63 while Nagata's (1974) anthropological research concentrated on Malays migrating to the urban areas of George Town and Alor Setar. Both these studies were able to capture some of the dynamic elements of the migration process. Nagata (1974: 317-21) detected circular mobility, a phenomenon which had been suggested as occurring in Peninsular Malaysia from indirect evidence (Hamzah Sendut, 1965; McTaggart and McEachern, 1969; Saw, 1972). Since then, findings by Maude (1979) and Strauch (1977) demonstrated the significance of circular migration in economically depressed Kelantan and among Chinese new villagers in the West Coast respectively. In far greater depth, McGee (1969) analyzed rural Malays adapting to urban life. Occupational mobility was one of the processes used for measuring the extent of urban integration. He (1969: 668-772) concluded that despite movement to towns, there was no major advancement or economic gain among the migrants, particularly after 1962. The finding exposed the inadequacies of western-derived models which assume both availability and ease of entry into urban occupations by rural migrants.

While these studies have added to migration knowledge in Peninsular Malaysia they have also pointed to existing gaps in our present understanding. First, there has been no research comparing the migration of Malays and Chinese on a micro-scale, in-depth level. Yet this very distinction which represents major economic, political and social differences within Peninsular Malaysia must have important bearings on migration.

Second, most of these studies were conducted in the destination-end. While destination-end studies have the advantage of interviewing the migrant (gathering information on their reasons for migration, and future intentions), the data suffer from rationalization and memory lapses. The motivation of migrants, a very complex issue (Pryor, 1975a; 1975b;

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1 Nagata did not discuss her methodology. It is assumed that the study was in urban areas because she mentioned two towns. While George Town can be identified, the other town, Bintang is probably Alor Setar where "Setar" (a type of tree) may have been translated as "bintang" meaning "star" in Bahasa.
De Jong and Gardner, 1981) have to be accepted at face-value – as declared retrospective reasons. They cannot be cross-checked against the information from family members at the origin areas (Caldwell, 1969: 15) nor examined within the broader institutional framework of the norms of the community structure which may have influenced migration (see Mabogunje, 1970). Although the major motive for migration is economic (McGee, 1969; Pryor, 1972; Khoo and Voon, 1974; Nagata, 1974; Suresh, 1975), a destination-end approach is not able to examine the economic background from which the migrant originates or the context in which the decisions are made.

It has been suggested that households play a vital role in affecting migration decision-making processes in Third World countries (Caldwell, 1969; Byerlee and Eicher, 1974; Connell et al., 1976). The household demographic structure, its survival strategies and other inter-locking processes which unfolds within the family life course all impinge on the migrant’s decision to migrate. Therefore, information on the migrant, detached from the household context presents only a partial view.

Another disadvantage of destination-end studies is the characteristics of migrants sampled at the destination-end which cannot be compared with their counterparts in the source-end who did not migrate. More importantly, outmigrants are examined as a specific type, isolated from the other types of migration and mobility of which outmigrants form a part. Also, studies conducted at the destination fail to capture return migrants. Therefore, the real effect of labour absorption is difficult to assess.

Finally, although rural-rural migration is one of the major types of migration flow in Third World countries (see Davis, 1969) including Malaysia, there is little research on it. With the rise in interest on rural resettlement projects in the country, as mentioned earlier, and as practically all the immigrants are from rural areas, these studies have provided, for the first time, some knowledge of the rural-rural stream. However, it is still a very specific type of migration. A rural source-end approach examining all types of outmigration from the rural end is able to capture the whole spectrum of mobility and migration.

However, there is a problem of source-end studies whereby whole households which have migrated may be missed out. This is remedied by asking village elders, families and noting empty houses.\(^3\) A tracer study, combining both the source-end and following up of the migrant at the destination-end, provides a better, albeit, far more difficult methodology. This is attempted in this study.

\(^3\) Houses are seldom rented out in Malaysian villages. In the case study, about seven houses were found empty. Information about those migrated families was readily derived from relatives and neighbours.

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The late 1970s and early 1980s saw for the first time, the migration of young Malay women from rural areas to work in factories in the expanding Free Trade Zones (FTZs). Most of these studies have tended to concentrate on the characteristics of these new migrants, their adaptation to urban work and life (Jamilah, 1978; Kamal et al., 1988).

While the body of knowledge on migration in Malaysia continues to grow with more national-level analysis based on the census or nation-wide surveys and other case studies, what is becoming obvious is that these studies are beginning to appear repetitive – as is already the case in migration research generally. Migration research appears to have reached an intellectual impasse. As long as the analysis of migration is not framed in a way where the phenomenon is seen as both a response and a conditioning factor of social change in a country, there will be limited new development in the understanding of the phenomenon. We now turn to the other important aspect of migration, its explicit incorporation into development policy planning in the country.

1.3.2 The Role of Migration in Malaysia’s National Planning

The NEP represented a new era in Malaysian development planning. It was born out of an urgent need for greater social integration and a more equitable distribution of income and opportunities for all Malaysians. The foundation for these social disparities and economic inequalities have been laid during the colonial era to be further entrenched by an independent government (see Chapter 2). The NEP had a two-pronged development strategy which attacked the basic imbalances in the Malaysian society by:

(a) reducing and eradication poverty irrespective of race; and
(b) accelerating the restructuring of Malaysian society in order to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function and geographical location (Malaysia, Government of, 1971: 1).

The aims of the NEP have been reaffirmed and more clearly delineated within the framework of the Third Malaysia Plan 1976-80 (Malaysia, Government of, 1976: 96-7) where the role of migration was outlined. Migration out of less-developed areas was to be encouraged as a means to reduce regional imbalances. The rural-urban flow should be stemmed by agro-based industries sited in rural areas to provide employment. At the same time, the movement of capital and skills from urban to rural areas would be stimulated.

Migration became one of the means to achieve the two development strategies of the NEP. To combat poverty there would be opportunities for intersectoral transfer of labour from low productivity to higher productivity activities. This implied the geographical mobility
of poverty groups\footnote{The poverty line was derived from the Post Enumeration Survey (1970). Forty-nine of all households were below the poverty line. This affected mainly rural households (59 of all rural households) who were mostly Malay (65 of all Malay households). The major poverty groups were padi-farmers, rubber and coconut smallholders, fishermen, estate workers, residents of New Villages, agricultural labourers, Orang Asli (Aborigines), urban poor and the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak (Malaysia, Government of, 1976: 161-4).} to areas of economic potential, such as areas of natural endowment (for example, Pahang and Johor for their land and forest resources), growth centres\footnote{There are two types of growth centres. One consists of established towns. The other is new growth centres located in rural development schemes. These growth centres provide opportunities for Malays in secondary and tertiary activities. Smaller centres are more conducive for Malay labour absorption owing to their propensity for short distance moves (Nagata, 1974: 321). Suresh, 1975: 113), and the less complex skills demanded which means less competition with the other communities already established in the major cities (Malaysia, Government of, 1976: 169).} and most important, land development schemes\footnote{There are two types of land development schemes. The first consists of large-scale capital investment in an existing heavily-populated agricultural region (usually non-growing) such as the Muda (Kedah-Perlis), KEMURI (Kelantan) and Kran (Perak). The second type is the development in virgin jungle, for example, the Jentikka Triangle, Pahang-Tenggara and Johor-Tenggara. The latter schemes have more impact on population redistribution, hence the interest in their impact during the 1980s.}. To restructure society, Malays engaged in subsistence agriculture below the poverty line would be shifted to urban areas and industrial sector occupations in which they are currently under-represented (Malaysia, Government of, 1973: 1). While the urbanization of the Malays would be encouraged, Chinese and Indian migration to rural areas will also be fostered. This would be achieved through increased intake of non-Malays to FELDA schemes and shifting of Chinese to rural areas to exploit their market-gardening skills (Malaysia, Government of, 1976: 189). To achieve the interstate migration targeted by 1990, there has to be sizeable movements of labour from Kedah, Perlis and Kelantan. Selangor, Pahang, Penang and East Malaysia must continue to be the principal receiving states.

It is clear that the government viewed migration as an important means of achieving the goals of the NEP. So central was migration to government policy that “balanced mobility [was considered] one of the biggest challenges facing the country during the Third Malaysia Plan period” (Malaysia, Government of, 1976: 97).

This was the state of the government’s thinking and policy up to 1976, providing the impetus for the Simpang Enpat Mobility and Migration Surveys undertaken by the author. Up to the Third Malaysia Plan, there were still some confusion as to the exact role of migration, important as it was in effecting the objectives of the NEP. Up to that stage, knowledge on migration was still limited. Thus, from the perspective of that period, there was an urgent need for a greater understanding of the complicated processes of migration for the policies to be successfully implemented. Despite the crucial role migration was
expected to play in the achievement of the aims of the NEP there were gaps in the knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon.

It must be borne in mind that migration was expected to be simultaneously a centrifugal and a centripetal force, encouraged, sustained or discouraged – depending on the particular aim of the NEP and the government's five-year plans. Conflicts were bound to occur especially as the processes of migration were not fully understood. There were a number of fallacies concerning migration in government planning.

The first fallacy concerned the belief that the number of urban poor had been swelled by migrants from rural areas (see for example, Malaysia, Government of, 1973: 5). The Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan (Malaysia, Government of, 1973: 27) went on to predict that if the rates of rural-urban migration that prevailed between 1957 and 1970, continued into 1975, two million people would have changed their location during the five-year period. This conclusion was based on the assumption that there was rapid urbanization in Peninsular Malaysia. In fact this did not happen.

The second fallacy was the belief that urbanization was caused by a large influx of rural-urban migrants. As Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 show, this is incorrect. Up to 1970, and certainly even until 1976 as the village case study shows, the rural-urban migration stream was small. Although the Third Malaysia Plan acknowledged the slow rate of rural-urban migration, one of the two reasons forwarded as an explanation was questionable. It suggested that rural migrants could not find suitable employment because of the high level of skills required in the Kuala Lumpur – Petaling Jaya – Port Klang industrial belt known as the Klang Valley (Malaysia, Government of, 1976: 149). A more probable reason was that the government and private sectors in urban areas were not able to create enough employment for an expanding pool of job-seekers. Suresh (1975: 211-9) found that the incidence of unemployment was lower among migrants than non-migrants, when standardized for educational level, age, sex and ethnicity. Besides, the high rates of unemployment in the urban areas would attest to the lack of employment opportunities for all segments of the population, rather than immigrants who, in the Malaysian case, always performed better than the non-migrants. Whitney and Jones (1973: 74-5) had predicted

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1 See Jones (1975: 99-100) for reasons for the prevailing belief that Third World countries are undergoing rapid urbanization. In Malaysia, this conclusion was partly based on the artificially inflated urbanization rate between 1947 and 1957 (caused by the Emergency resettlement). It was assumed that this high rate would continue into the 1970s.

2 The other more plausible reason is the success of the land settlement schemes in drawing off surplus labour from subsistence agriculture.

3 This does not account for unemployed migrants who might have returned to their rural homes and therefore are left out in a survey at the receiving end.

4 See Chapter 4 for the employment rates among migrants of 1965-70.
that unemployment, as a result of the unprecedented growth of the labour force, would be one of the major challenges facing Southeast Asian nations during the next decades.

Another serious problem associated with migration and the Third Malaysia Plan was the contradictions in the two-pronged development strategy of the NEP. Heavy government investment into in situ agricultural development projects such as MADA (Muda Agricultural Development Authority) may, in the short-run, alleviate poverty and prevent outmigration. In the longer-run, the rise in incomes, coupled with the increasing ease and accessibility to educational facilities, and higher aspirational levels, both of parents and children, would lead to outmigration of a growing educated group.

A similar type of problem exists in the resettlement of landless farmers in presently economically viable blocks of rubber and oil palm land development schemes. Known as the "second generation" problem, all the children of these settlers cannot be absorbed into the family farm and would have to migrate to other land development schemes or to urban areas. It is likely to be a shift to urban areas as already, settlers have expressed their preference for their children to get white-collar jobs and live outside these schemes (Ogawa and Chan, 1985). Besides, the higher-than-average incomes of the settlers, availability of education in these schemes, and continuing support in education by the government will put their children in good stead for outmigration to urban areas. Thus, these two types of rural development schemes will only serve to stager outmigration. They will not retain people unless there are jobs there that are commensurate with the rising education and aspirations of the youths. Therefore, government policies must anticipate this outmigration.

Similarly, the creation of new urban centres on these land schemes raises two questions on urban restructuring. First, to what extent can this accelerated urbanization of the Malays, with respect to other Malaysians, be accommodated in these schemes. Second, to what extent will this lower level urbanization draw labour away from the spontaneous urbanization streams that will converge on the existing larger towns in the more established regions of the country? These issues must be examined more carefully in the light of problems of urban concentration and urban management.

Finally, although Suresh (1975: ii) concluded that labour absorption into metropolitan Selangor is efficient, the restructuring of the society is attained not merely by a change from rural to urban sectors. The quality of occupations is an important consideration. While the informal sector in urban areas may act as a "safety valve" for rural migrants, this process cannot be sustained indefinitely - for the NEP aims not merely at increasing the volume of Malay participation but also, the value of their participation as well. This means
not only in terms of wealth owned as proposed in the NEP but also in terms of skills and income. It was targeted that by 1990 Malay participation and ownership should be 30 per cent of the national total (Malaysia, Government of, 1976: 1). The success of this objective depends on numerous factors including the world economic condition, the buoyancy of the Malaysian economy and the labour absorptive capacity of the urban areas. An analysis by Kamal (1975a) of the socio-economic profiles of cities, in particular, the nature and degree of Bumiputra participation in Peninsular Malaysia in 1970 revealed that the cities were largely Chinese with low Malay participation. Malay participation tended to vary according to the size of the city and location in a region as defined by its wealth per capita. By sectoral participation, Malays featured mainly in services (government services), transport and utilities with low levels of participation in manufacturing. These same findings are also found in the migration streams analysis in Chapter 3.

It is for these reasons that rural development must move in step with urban development. Because of rural-urban linkages, the freeing of educated rural Malays with increased expectations without a concomitant absorption of them into the urban areas would see the failure of the policy to restructure society. Therefore, there are justifications for a national system of rationalized growth centres (Kamal, 1975b). These centres will not only provide new jobs in manufacturing for potential migrants and thus, discourage them from migrating to the current urban centres, especially the Klang valley in search of work, but will ensure some dispersal of economic development to lagging areas. But for all these policies to work, there is an urgent need to understand the structure and processes of migration and its inter-relationship with the broader social, economic and political structure of the country.

After the Third Malaysia Plan and its Mid-Term Review (Malaysia, Government of, 1978) the prominent role accorded to migration through the NEP appeared to have been deemphasized in the subsequent plans. Perhaps it was assumed that migration would automatically perform its role. The problem of first applying migration as a tool to shift rural Malays to land settlement schemes and using in situ agricultural development to alleviate poverty and thus, slowing down their rate of rural-urban migration may be seen as the major issues of the 1970s.

By the late 1970s and in the 1980s, the emphasis had changed to industrialization, to the creation of sufficient jobs to cater to the rapidly increasing numbers of job seekers, especially new rural migrants, entering the labour market. It was in response to these demands that the government found it expedient to give generous tax incentives to foreign investors to locate their factories in the newly-created FTZs. Because these factories were labour-intensive, being mostly electronics and textiles, they employed mainly women as production workers. These goals constituted the “new” migrants, part of the third “wave”
of urbanization (see Chapter 5) which is the important subject of migration studies for the 1980s.

The Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981-85 (Malaysia, Government of, 1981: 111) noted the increase in urbanization, especially among Malays and attributed it to the rapid growth of job opportunities especially in the services (government services), construction and manufacturing (private sector) in the 1970s. It concentrated on a four-pronged urban strategy: accelerating the development of towns with prospects for agglomeration economies; development of satellite towns and service centres to complement the growth of major urban centres; development of intermediate towns such as Alor Setar to complement the growth of regional growth centres; and strengthening the major regional centres such as Johor Bahru and Kuantan identified under the Third Malaysia Plan (Malaysia, Government of, 1981: 108-9).

These strategies were based on the following premises which have implications on migration. The first is that urban development will expand the industrial and tertiary sectors which will, in turn, generate more productive and remunerative urban-based activities for Malays, thus creating a bumiputra commercial and industrial community, as envisaged in the NEP. Second, by spreading the urban areas, dubbed the strategy of rural urbanization, rural people will have easier and greater access to urban services and amenities. Finally, it was hoped that the development of urban centres would provide a catalyst for growth in the less developed areas, reducing the imbalances already in existence. Thus, the first premise is the creation of jobs for rural-urban migrants while the last two are attempts to retain the rural populace through rural development— that is, correcting the urban bias so typical of Third World countries which have created serious outmigration from rural areas.

By the Fifth Malaysia Plan, 1986-90 (Malaysia, Government of, 1986) the urban growth rate was expected to increase further (from 5.9 per cent in 1985 to 7.3 per cent by 1990) with an anticipated larger contribution from rural migration. The pattern of migration between 1981-85 had highlighted four zones: the north which consisted of a narrowly-based manufacturing sector, the central region which had traditionally attracted most migrants, with its diversified economic structure; the eastern region which attracted settlers and contract workers to the land settlement schemes; and the southern region where the economic structure is well-balanced but is losing migrants to other regions.

The prospects for the Fifth Malaysia Plan which have implications for migration is associated with the reorientation of regional and urban development strategies. There was a move to deemphasize states (for example, the notion of a lagging state such as Kedah) in
favour of regions (such as the northern region which is not constrained artificially by administrative boundaries) as the unit for planning. Instead of spreading resources thinly, as in the earlier plans, by developing industrial estates in many locations and developing towns which had problems getting settlers, the new approach aims to consolidate and concentrate development. The rationale for this is that industrial estates can reap the benefits of agglomeration; develop towns to complement rural urbanization; and move people to where jobs are as well as to move jobs to where people are.

The role of migration is again explicit. It is to be used to move people to regions (rather than states) where there are opportunities. Meanwhile, centres with growth potential within these regions will be developed to absorb urban-bound migrants. At the same time, the rural areas surrounding these regions will be revitalized to raise the incomes of those who remain. The emphasis is on the region with migration and development within the region.

While the understanding of migration processes proves to be fallacious in some of the earlier planning assumptions, the central role of migration in ensuring the participation of Bumiputras in the modern sectors of the economy, especially those in rural areas, is part of the NEP objectives. The deeper understanding of these migration processes and their linkage to the multi-level structure of factors, internal and external, is necessary to assess what works and what does not.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Research Objectives

The main objective of this dissertation is to examine migration in Peninsular Malaysia in the context of Malaysia’s developmental experience, within the framework of analysis as outlined. The approach adopted attempts to overcome the problems of existing migration studies as discussed, and to incorporate new methods of analysis that should bring out the more salient aspects of migration to Malaysia. For this purpose, a two-circuit hypothesis is formulated as a model of the structural relationship between Malaysia’s development and the migration patterns it engendered. The analysis seeks to understand these patterns within a historical context, examining the responses of migrants according to their ethnic and economic background in order to explain the peculiarities of the migration process in Malaysia.
It was pointed out that there is a lack of understanding of migration and its determinants in terms of both process and policy implications. What is unique in the Malaysian situation is that migration is not merely a tool of redistribution of population but is part of a strategy to restructure society under the NEP. This is unlike other countries, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, where migration policy is primarily used to alleviate the extreme concentration of population in the major island or urban concentration, respectively.

It is important to appreciate this point for two reasons. First, the migration phenomenon is determined by its complex relationships with economic structure, just as it influences that structure itself. Second, migration as policy is not necessarily efficacious because it does not wholly contribute to the achievement of its objectives, such as population redistribution or primacy reduction, because of the interplay of other non-controllable factors and the effect of other policy influences, which may themselves be more efficacious. For example, in order to reduce urban primacy, it is not sufficient to prevent rural migrants from coming into the city without concomitant policies of rural development.

More specifically, a number of issues must be addressed in advancing our understanding of migration. These include:

1) the links between individual-level decisions with the broader structural factors and processes. While researchers often cite this point, the idea is usually implicit in their analysis rather than actually analyzed and operationalized. Thus the need to specify the national development model to see unfolding processes and structures determining migration in a particular historical context. This also means stating and analyzing the multi-level linkages, the world economy, the national economy and the regional-local economy. The two-circuit hypothesis of migration in Malaysia developed in this thesis is born out of this conceptualization.

2) the need to take a longitudinal view of the migration process, in order to see how both macro- and micro-processes as well as their interlinkages take place through the various phases of development and impact on each other in different ways. This implies the adoption of a historical approach to migration analysis, both in terms of the unfolding national development experience at the macro-level as well as the individual life history in the context of family histories at the micro-level.

3) how policies, reflecting the given conditions at different times, affect and impacts on migration processes at macro- and micro-levels.

There are a number of theoretical questions that are of special interest that also needs to be addressed. What stands out in the survey of migration research is that in spite of massive data collection and empirical analysis including case studies from all over, there have been little theoretical breakthrough in migration research. Among those that need to be explored further in theoretical and empirical terms are three issues:

1) that the decision to migrate is not purely an isolated, individual volitional decision, but rather, is conditioned by family or household considerations which are
themselves influenced or constrained by the broader socio-cultural as well as local, regional and national processes.

2) that a more meaningful understanding of migration in a structural sense is to study migrants as a group in a mobility continuum that includes circulators/commuters and stayers in their total village context.

3) that push-pull factors and origin-destination studies of migration are inadequate unless seen in their total context and linkages (rural and urban), and that rural and urban areas are not simple but rather complex societies which cannot be reduced to mere probabilities of migration as in the Harris-Todaro model.

From the policy point of view, the important issues are:

1) the efficacy of migration as a policy tool in social engineering, relative to other policy instruments in effecting population distribution and change.

2) the controllability of market forces or other structural determinants such as the decisions of FNCs, technology, etc. in the implementation of migration policies.

3) that migration policy is part of a larger set of policies, therefore, it cannot be implemented in isolation, separated from other development policies such as industrialization or rural development programmes.

4) that policy impacts may be permanent or temporal depending on the entrenchment of migration structures and processes, which of course depends on a whole set of other factors.

In undertaking this migration study in Peninsular Malaysia, even more specific questions are raised. They are:

1) At the broader level:
   a) the specifics of the Malaysian model of development.
   b) the impact of colonialism in the structuring of migration.
   c) the characteristics of migration streams as description of circuits of migration.
   d) the policies of the post-independent government on migration.

2) At the village level:
   a) the different types of mobility and migration in the study area.
   b) the reasons why people leave, remain or return to their kampung.
   c) the relationships of the above to the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the migrants.

3) At the household and individual level:
   a) how do family and personal life experiences according to their life-histories and stages of the life-cycle impinge on the process of migration in terms of the decision to migrate, strategy for education, access to work, and selection of destinations.
   b) how do macro-events affect the individual and family life-courses of the migrant.

In this thesis these research questions, at both the macro- and the micro-levels, have been set in a consistent framework of structural analysis of internal migration as described in the previous section. The search for answers to these questions, in the particular experience of
Malaysia, would require the choice of appropriate methodology consistent with the above multi-level framework.

1.4.2 Methodology

Meaningful answers to the questions of internal migration require the integration of macro-level (international or national) analysis with the meso-level (the region or state) with the micro-level (household or individual). Such a methodology must also be inter-disciplinary. The life-history method integrated into family histories is also used for its rich source of information. Set out below is a brief discussion of the methodology.

Linkages between Micro-Macro Scales

There appears to be a schism between the micro- and macro-scale of migration analysis and explanation. This is exemplified by the approach of anthropologists (micro) and economists (macro) who often use one level exclusively (see Epstein, 1975). However, these two scales are compatible rather than conflicting if their limits are understood. Ryder (1964: 458-9) defined the macro- and the micro-approaches in the following way:

“The macro-analytical level of inquiry consists of propositions or statements of relationships among the properties of the population as units of reference. The micro-analytical level of inquiry consists of propositions or statements of relationships among the properties of the individual as the unit of reference.”

The macro-method has tended to dominate migration research for two reasons. First, those who worked on migration such as demographers, economists and to some extent, geographers, have had a tradition of macro-approach in their search for models. The micro-approach is mainly used in anthropology and some segments of historical demography. The general disenchantment with models derived from aggregative data and the interest in the behavioural approach has given micro-studies greater relevance, particularly in the fields of fertility and migration (Clarke, 1976: 25).

The second reason relates to the availability of data. Most researchers have depended on census data as the major and most easily accessible source of national migration statistics. This is evident from major works on migration which have used census data (see Bogue, 1957; Eldridge, 1964, 1965; Ravenstein, 1885, 1889; Tauber et al., 1968; Thomas, 1959) including country-level reports especially from the Third World. While census data provide an objective, national coverage of migration flows, rates and characteristics of migration, they fail to capture the complexities and dynamic nature of migration. Micro-
scale studies may be tailored to the aims of the researcher but they are often criticized for their lack of representativeness.

Therefore, both macro- and micro-approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. In this study, both macro- and micro-approaches will be used to complement each other in the attempt to understand migration. While the census data describe the national flows and characteristics, the micro-study probes the factors which produce these patterns. Linking certain moves by a migrant in his life-history and life-course to the broader political, economic changes is an attempt to integrate both approaches.

**Inter‐Disciplinary Approach**

The multi-faceted phenomenon of migration and its relevance for different disciplines accounts for the interest in the subject by various branches of the social sciences. This is evidenced in the diverse migration literature.  

Demographers are concerned with the calculation and estimation of migration flows (Hamilton, 1965, 1966, 1967; Stone, 1967; Shryock and Siegel, 1971) and selectivity of migrant streams (Thomas, 1938; Bogue, 1961; Stone, 1967). Geographers and regional scientists are associated with migration and distance (Morrill, 1965), urban hierarchy and functional distance (Brown et al., 1970), directional bias (Wolpert, 1967; Adams, 1969) and information flows (Berry and Schwid, 1969). Sociologists are interested in the effect of migration on social change (Jackson, 1969; Jansen, 1970) and explain migration in terms of the life-cycle and career pattern (Leslie et al., 1961; Ladisky, 1967). Economists view migration within the framework of rational man who optimizes his economic opportunities in response to cost-benefit decisions (Sjostad, 1962) and wage differentials and expected income (Harris and Todaro, 1970). Political scientists are interested in squatter settlements as potential seedbeds of political activities (Laquian, 1973), while anthropologists study problems of migrant adjustment in the new environment (Mangin, 1970; Du Toit et al., 1975).

The conceptualization and theoretical contributions to migration research have been as diverse as the disciplines of the scholars. One would expect that the plethora of information on migration would lead to some basis for a more integrated theory of migration. Yet, it would seem that this very diversity of approaches has inhibited the construction of migration theory because of their narrow discipline-bound interests.

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13 See Shaw (1975) and United Nations (1973) for a general review and Amin (1974), Connell et al., (1976), Todaro (1976), Simmons et al. (1977), and Yapp (1977) for Third World examples.
unevenness of research focus, inconsistency of methodology and a lack of communication (or interest) of research findings between researchers of different disciplines.

My thesis in this study is that a meaningful explanation of the pattern and processes of migration in a country lies in a structural approach which is inter-disciplinary combining the historical and contemporary socio-economic and political forces within the world system.

**Life-History and Family History Approach**

Another reason for migration being one of the hardest population components to analyze is that the factors which influence migration vary on impact and perception by the migrant at different stages of his life-cycle. There are factors in the life-cycle which provide not only a particular orientation to the world outside and its influences, but also a particular set of opportunities at different stages of life. It is argued in this study that critical stages may be discerned, such as birth, commencement and termination of school, first major job, marriage and dissolution, birth of children, children leaving the household, retirement and death. Although the actual age for each of these events may be affected by the different socio-cultural factors (between different community groups) and economic circumstances (between cohorts), each of these stages affects the decision-making of the individual (Young, 1978). Transverse or static analysis do not fully capture the effect of time and all its ramifications on the migrant.

In order to analyze the impacts of macro-structures on the household, individual and family life-histories are constructed. Individual life-histories give a year-by-year account of important events in a person’s life (changes in family formation, education, occupation, etc.). When meshed together with those of the rest of the family, family life-histories are created. By tracing the changing family life-cycle or the life-course (see Elder, 1978) we are able to see how the family and the household affect the individual and his decision to migrate. Here the question of household strategies of coping and adjusting covers the allocation of family resources such as labour (who should remain in the family business/farm, who should work outside and who should migrate) and investment (who to educate). Particular events affecting one member of the household may determine the changes of the next, for example, the death of the major breadwinner may force a...

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14 In the case study, some of the socio-cultural factors which influence migration but vary in importance between Malays and Chinese are: attitudes to migration and jobs, age at marriage, place of residence after marriage and parents’ dependence. Differences are discernible even between Chinese dialect groups, for example, Cantonese and Teochews, in their attitudes toward laterally extended families.

15 An example of this from the case study are the people entering the labour force before and after World War II. There were marked differences in their level of education and consequently types of jobs.
reallocation of work, and investment causing children to be withdrawn from school, forced to enter the labour market and migrate. This methodology will be adopted in this study.

1.4.3 Plan of Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part, consisting of Chapters 1 to 3, treats the research issues at the macro-level, and discusses the theoretical framework and empirical basis of the two-circuit hypothesis of migration in Peninsular Malaysia. The second part, comprising Chapters 4 to 7, goes down to the micro-level, and complements the first by analyzing in some depth, the structure and processes of different types of mobility and migration as expressions of how individuals and families adapt in a particular political-economic situation. The point of departure of the second part is the treatment of migration at the rural-end, rather than as is usually done, at the destination-end. Here, the migrants were traced to their destination. A later group of migrants was studied from the urban-end and traced back to their villages. A second point of departure is to study the migration experience of particular groups of migrants in terms of the impact of significant events, such as Independence in 1957, the advent of export platform industrialization, the 1985 recession, as well as prevailing characteristics such as ethnicity.

In Chapter 1, we reviewed the models of migration and development and the literature of research on migration in Malaysia in order to develop the theoretical framework for this research. The role of migration in Malaysian development policy was also examined. Then we discussed the research objectives and methodology of this study.

Chapter 2 discusses Malaysia's model of development and traces the evolution of the colonial economy and its impact on the structuring of the two-circuit system. This is followed by an examination of the urbanization experience in terms of waves of urbanization in order to demonstrate the formation of the two-circuit system, and of rural development as a set of post-Independent policy measures that had contributed to the conservation of the structured migration pattern described by the two-circuit hypothesis.

Statistical evidence to support the idea of the two-circuit system is presented in Chapter 3 by examining the 1965-70 migration streams by strata. This statistical analysis covers the locational and socio-demographic characteristics, and in particular the economic structure of the two-circuits of migration. Because the association of location with sectors is too simplistic, an analysis of the same migration streams by the formal/informal sectors is carried out. In spite of this refinement, the evidence point to the same conclusion. It is this occupational, locational and ethnic structure of migration which the government has sought
to change through its migration policy and other forms of state intervention as reflected in the NEP introduced in 1970. The impact of the NEP is discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4 examines the regional and local context of the study villages in Muda based on a field survey undertaken in 1976, as a background to the study of mobility groups. Here, we sought evidence of the process of conservation and dissolution of the two-circuits at the local-level. From these data, a typology of mobility and migration groups is devised in order to place the outmigrant group in their social context in terms of their socio-demographic and economic characteristics which reflect closely the national pattern of Chapter 3. Labour mobility may be analyzed as response to particular developments in the local, regional and national economy. In this regard, the chapter analyzes the linkages between individual histories of migration and the broader structural factors through devising of a concept of "critical moves", as a methodology to integrate the micro-level data with the macro-level data through analysis of the life-history data as personal conjunctures at different stages of the life-cycle as they reflect the changes in the socio-economic and political structure.

The following chapter, Chapter 5 bridges the mid-1970s with the mid-1980s. It deals with a new migration phenomenon, that of rural Malay females migrating to work in the recently developed electronics industry in the export platform zones. This analysis is from the urban-end, examining how international economic developments, in concert with national and local government policies structure migration patterns. It shows the effect of trade cycles on the workers. This analysis, basically macro in approach is based on a survey carried out in 1982 on workers in the FTZs compared with workers in the informal sector in Penang.

In Chapter 6 which covers the same period, the micro-level approach extended through the study of household histories of migration. The methodology of this relatively new area of study is surveyed, and then applied to a sample of factory girls drawn from a field survey carried out in 1985 to 1987. Two case studies of individual migrants drawn from the sample is examined in great detail to identify their status and migration experience within the family and wider structural context. These case studies illustrate in finer detail the individual processes of the two-circuits. By introducing the method of life-course diagrams, we were able to integrate the various household structures and processes to the wider economic context in order to understand the fuller complexities of the migration process.

Chapter 7 examines the post-1970 situation by assessing the role of migration in achieving the objectives of the NEP in breaking the entrenched two-circuit system in Peninsular
Malaysia. This will be considered in the context of the vast sectoral change brought about by the rapid industrialization of the 30-year period, culminating in the third wave of urbanization where over half the population becomes urban consisting of mostly Malays in modern sector occupations traditionally associated with the Chinese. Labour shortages will occur in tandem with the transformation, inducing a massive influx of foreign migrant workers. All these forces seal the process of rupture of the two-circuit system of migration.

The Conclusion recapitulates the major arguments and research issues raised in this thesis pointing to areas for future research, policy implications and the final disintegration of the structured nature of migration in the country.