Aakash Budathoki

Modernity & Migration

Sociology

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Supervisor: Debra Hopkins
Examiner: Gunilla Lönnbring
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Modernity and migration

1.1 Aim
The main objective of my project is to analyze the challenges caused by today’s modern phenomenon of change in our society and to discuss it in relationship to the process of migration. Migration is one of the most discussed subjects today. People move far and wide on a daily basis. It goes hand in hand with the process of change. Migration and modernity are often regarded as correlated factors. It’s difficult to specify whether the movement of the people today is the result of modernity or is it migration which results to modernity.

This is a theoretical rather than an empirical methods paper. So I will not be dealing with numbers instead I prefer to support my understanding by reference to the work of some social theorists. I develop a case study of migration utilising the theorists’ contributions as well as various data resources from relevant databases in order to demonstrate the necessity of both micro and macro sociology to an empirical problem like migration.

1.2 Research question
My broad aim is to investigate the challenges caused by today’s modern phenomenon of change in relationship with the consequences of people’s movement around the globe everyday. In doing so I focus on questions like ‘what does it really mean when a person becomes a migrant and what does it mean to be the host country? Migration is here referred to as the resettlement of the people with in a country or across the national borders and the term thus encompasses both movement from (emigration) and movement to (immigration) a country.
1.3 Background – modernity and change

Society has changed and the everyday lives of individuals are in some ways profoundly different to that of some decades back. It is in many ways a single world connected together through the modern means of communication and technology yet at the same time we experience new types of fragmentations and separations. Developments in the field of science and technology have remarkable influences on human daily life. It involves multi-faceted processes whereby connections through more effective information exchange, communication and transportation between people in different places across the globe are faster and more closely linked. In the past few decades there is massive acceleration in the scale of currency and financial dealing across the world. Giddens (Lecture 1: November 1999) refers to Danny Quah, an economist at LSE who uses the term weightless economy or knowledge economy to describe today’s global financial market. Weightless economy simply means that increasingly economic value on the global level depends upon the trading of information rather than the trading of material goods.

Modernity and modern developments have assisted us to fight back several problems and has helped in many ways to direct society to a better tomorrow, yet at the same time we are subjected today to several undesired problems and changes such as ecological disasters, social, political and economic uncertainty etc. In a simple word modernity is a change which is different, peculiar and special in its own way. Its essence is in the sense or the idea that the present is discontinuous with the past, through the process of social and cultural change. It can be either through improvement like progress or decline.

Almost every modern social thinker today refers to notions of detraditionalization while discussing modernity. This, however, does not strictly mean society without tradition. It rather means social order in which tradition changes its status, where society undergoes rapid changes, and traditions are routinely subjected to interrogation. Modern free social systems took over the traditional and cultural ways of more obviously controlled social systems. People experience greater degrees of
freedom and wider opportunities. Societies of risk and uncertainty arise from the human failure to predict the behavior and the nature of social change. Modernity is characterized by uncertainty and being a modern citizen means responding to uncertainty. It’s not in the hands of human control. Instead human beings are expected to undergo several changes and modifications to fit in this changing system. I have coined this ‘the game of adjustments and modifications’.

In this global society non western developing countries share with the west not only the same space and time but also most importantly the same basic challenges of modernity. Several countries in the west entertain benefits and development at the cost of cheap labor market from developing countries, where increasingly more people are required to compete in the global open market. Numbers of small cottage industries are closed every year and many loose their means of living in poor countries. These countries are still in the early stages of development. Unemployment rates are very high, and illiteracy is always a major problem. In some countries in the developing world, including South Asia and much of Africa, people still die of diseases like malaria, diarrhea, Black Fever. Here too, religious beliefs and cultural norms are dominating social institutions, and intersect with the ability to be a part of rapidly changing global phenomenon. This implies that every nation and every society do not compete as equals in modern living, but are nonetheless subjected to the same basic challenges of modernity. This anticipates the ethnic character of major immigrant groups in Sweden. This is one of the important areas of discussion in my essay.

It is important here to state my understanding of the term globalization. People view globalization in different ways. Some view it with hostility, even fear, believing that it increases inequality within and between nations, threatens employment, living standards and the environment. Anthony Giddens defines Globalization as “the intensification of world wide social relations which links distance localities and transactions’ – associated in terms of their extensity, intensity velocity and impact generating trans conditional or interregional flows and network of activity” (1999).
Globalization has not only resulted in the free flow of information and ideas around the globe but has also facilitated individuals with the freedom of movement. People migrate to another part of the globe and begin a new life. Migration has resulted in the construction of a new global society characterized by cultural, religious, historical and biographical diversity. The movement of the people has been tied to economic factors on a large scale. Migration can be permanent, temporary, voluntary or forceful. It can occur as a result of push and pull factors. Push factors are those which force people to move. This can include poverty, unemployment, war, insecurity, natural disaster, famine, over population etc. Pull factors are those which encourage a person to move. This can include better job opportunities, better education, better standard of living, sense of security etc. There also exists another type of migration around the globe today which embodies quite different features to those discussed above. This involves the movement of those privileged individuals who are out to explore the world, experience other ways of living and to live their dreams. They are guided very much by the idea of individualism and autonomy, highlighting the fact that, by virtue of economic circumstance, place of origin, educational background etc., not everyone is free to move, or free to stay.

I have spent more than sixteen years of my life in exile in two different countries in Asia, namely India and Nepal and since July, 2005, I now live in Sweden. I can be the living example of today’s global process of migration. By way of illustration, India has seen influxes of refugee populations throughout history. Today India is home for huge domestic and foreign displaced populations, and exercises an open border relationship with Nepal, and partly with Bhutan and Bangladesh. Individuals move from one place to the other within India and Nepal to facilitate access to resources and better living. My country, Bhutan, as a tiny nation of 700,000 people positioned uneasily between two giants—India to the south and China to the north— is was almost as isolated as the mythical realm of Shangri-La, to which it is still compared, until the early 1960s, when the first highway was constructed. Politically Bhutan was an absolute monarchy; established in 1907, practically autocratic, primitive, despotic and feudal. Today Bhutan is performing a wonderful drama of democracy. Approximately 12% of the
population controls about 70% of national income. Bhutanese people fall into three broad ethnic groups: Ngalongs, Sharchhops and Lhotshampas, the majority of whose ancestors have migrated to Bhutan at different points of time in history. I fall under the Nepali speaking Lhotshampas ethnic population living in the southern and eastern parts of Bhutan. The Nepali speaking ethnic groups of Bhutan migrated to Bhutan in 1624 A.D from Nepal when Nepal and Bhutan signed a friendship treaty. In the year 1989-1990 the government of Bhutan introduced a one land, one culture and one religion policy. Thousands of Nepali speaking southern Bhutanese were forced to leave the country. Today around 140,000 southern Bhutanese are living in exile in Nepal, India and other parts of the world longing for the day to return home. More than 100,000 of them are living in UNHCR supervised refugee camps in Eastern Nepal since 1991.

These seventeen years in exile was a great period of learning. I realised that we Bhutanese lived in complete isolation from the rest of the world. It’s true that we have managed to maintain our ancient tradition and culture, institutions which are relatively untouched by global phenomenon of change, but I feel that we have failed to be the part of global process. Exile has meant a series of difficult moments for Bhutan. It is often said that culture carries the history- it reflects the stages of development that an individual has gone through with time and defines the identity. My history reveals that I was just a loyal citizen of an absolute monarchy, and although for the older generation of refugees, religion and tradition remain important institutions, for younger people the importance of this is eroding. Such diversity, both within and between cultural identity, and its relevance for migration will be reflected in so many ways on my writing.
2. Theoretical framework
In deciding upon my theoretical framework, I had to select from the vast literature a few theorists who I feel are most relevant and useful in order to help me address my research question. Generally, I believe that every factor from bigger social institutions to minute incidents associated with an individual are of equal importance in understanding society as a whole. So I approach my research question here by considering both micro and macro theorists. Zygmunt Bauman, Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck as macro social theorists and Erving Goffman as a ‘micro’ social theorist are those which I have used in my project.

2.1 Zygmunt Bauman- Post modernity and individualism
Bauman’s theory of individualism (2001; 2) seeks to explain individuals’ positions in today’s globalized society, individuals who own freedom of choice and movement. Individuals are freer from ancient traditions, culture, family taboos and religious obligations. It asserts the basic human rights of an individual to have his or her own needs, interests and capabilities recognised. Family structures have changed with time. Levels of dependency with in the kinship networks have been greatly minimised. One can assume that welfare state systems perform many functions today that were previously performed by family in early industrial societies. Traditional modes of mutuality and dependency collapsed with the process of modernization where workers were hired for the duration of their working lives (Bauman, 2001; 22). Capital and workers were united, for richer and poorer, health and sickness and until death. Both coordinated and co-operated with each other. Each side had vested interests in keeping each other in favourable condition. With the growth of industrialization workers began to exercise more freedom to demand and negotiate. Labour unions were formed and individuals’ voices were represented. We have access to options and alternatives depending upon availability of wealth and level of education. Latest calculations show that a young American with a moderate educational background tends to change jobs at least eleven times in his or her working life. After every successful academic course an individual becomes ready for new work with higher responsibility. They look for a new place and a better opportunity to use their knowledge and to achieve their goals.
Today it is possible increasingly to perform most of the work living in any corner of the globe through modern means of technology and communication. This provides greater freedom of movement. Local factors and local governments hardly come into discussion at this age of business process outsourcing. People make big profits selling ideas not just material objects.

Social rules and cultures govern human activity drawing limitations and putting everything in order (Bauman, 2001; 34-35). But we have escaped it. We live today in an individualised society and exercise freedom from almost all social rules, customs and rituals. But how free are we? It’s true that we are no more regulated by our ancient culture and family rules but we belong to society. We have social rules and obligations to follow. It’s true that everybody has opportunities to create a new space, to explore possibilities and to design the life as desired. At the same time we are subjected to certain limitations and constrains. We need to respond to changes going around us, so that although we are free from ancient cultural rules and religious obligations we are still not completely free. We are being regulated by our present social condition.

Globalization stands for self-propelling, spontaneous process with no one sitting at the control desk. People are bound to run with the speed of time. One hardly has time for family celebrations and social gatherings. One hardly knows who lives in the next door. We belong to a modern world of science and technology. We are dependent on it. Electronic transmission of information about everything happening round the globe is now spontaneous and demands no more than a plug in a socket. We belong to wider society and are associated directly or indirectly with a variety of activities happening around the globe every day. At the same time we have lost contact with our own culture, traditions, family etc.

These cultural constrains somewhat challenged by globalization, in some cases, can cause a rebound tightening of them. Plurality of culture, religion, belief etc. has resulted from people’s movement far and wide, and puts pressure on existing unified institutions of religion and culture with common beliefs and practices. Emile Durkheim in his book “The Elementary Forms of Religious Life” (1912) wrote about
social groups as having common feelings of emotional solidarity, excitement, exhilaration, and comfort. Feelings are attributed to the engagement with a common focus, which occupies and defines the awareness of the group, to the exclusion of anything outside its influence. But religions aren’t just collections of beliefs about sacred things. It also offers a conception of the universe and the universal connectedness of all things. We cannot avoid that we live in a society with a variety of culture and religious beliefs. People migrate and settle down in different cultural settings. This demands greater degree of adjustments and modifications guided by rational understanding of one's own identity in relation to many others. Cultural constrains are not always healthy practices. For many immigrants the retention of religion and cultural settings within the family based economic system is extremely important and resilient because they fear that the modern western living will erode their culture. Fear is the power source of violence. In fact if we think of the major violence of recent times, they arise from fear of consequences of situations that we can hardly know or predict. London has suffered several bomb attacks resulting in material destruction and the loss of several hundreds civilians. A bomb blast in London on 7th July 2005 (BBC report, 13 July 2005) is a prominent example.

Zygmunt Bauman’s approach to subject matter differs from other social scientists. He is not constrained by his discipline: he is at once sociologist and philosopher. He goes almost everywhere and employs a variety of ideas and approaches. He is no easy read. Bauman relates individuals to social and political institutions, defines the mode of relationship and degrees of influence between them. I feel that he provides the picture of today’s modern man as an individual and a member of fast moving global village.
2.2 Theories of reflective modernity

Giddens’ and Beck’s *theory of reflective modernity* draw an analysis based on comparative modalities of society, drawn from the early modern territory oriented and controlled nation state system, and its redefinition today. Reflective modernization *(1998:110)* talks about late modernity reflecting on the limitations and difficulties of modernity itself. Giddens is most concerned with social process where as Beck focuses mostly on political institutional changes.

2.2.1 The sociology of Anthony Giddens

Giddens *(1991:12)* talks about changes, both *internal* and *external*, to discuss influences of modernity in our society, and in the life of an individual. Society is subjected to external change. Changes also occur within the concrete periphery of human intimate institutions like family, kinship ties, marriage etc. This constitutes internal factors, and the two are interconnected. Modernity affects social systems and individuals’ daily lives. Western democratic and individualistic society provides freedom for individuals to design their life the way they want it and to create their own identity. Self identity is not inherited or static; rather, it becomes a reflective project, an effort which we continuously work and reflect on. Giddens *(1991; 54)* writes that "A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor - important though this is - in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going". Individuals’ positions and identities are the product of continuous integration with events happening in the external world. There exist a variety of resources and options and individuals have the liberty to choose. We are increasingly free to choose what we want to do and who we want to be although differential availability of wealth regulates the access to resources and options. Individual access to multiple resources and opportunities can be both productive and troubling: productive in a sense that it provides opportunities to choose the life the way he or she adores, and troubling in a way that it demands high degrees of negotiation which at times might be physically and psychologically costly.
Giddens is interested in the internal processes of society—in particular, in how the notion of tradition in high modernity is transforming into a new notion of tradition in reflexive modernity. According to Giddens, marriages, for instance are no longer social rituals among kinship groups initiated by parents but instead it’s a union of two persons who share something in common (Giddens, 1991; 89). They live together as long as both partners feel comfortable and are happy in each other’s co-presence. It’s a matter of feelings, desire, understanding, support and co-operation among them. Both are almost equally responsible to manage the relationship and exercise almost equal degrees of influence. The rights of a woman to initiate divorce have a major equilibrating effect. They limit the capacity of a man to impose his domination and thereby contribute to the translation of coercive power into equilibrated communication. This contributes to maintaining the balance of distribution of power and control within a family and also in a society. Every one has rights to live the way he or she likes it. Our present is in many ways the reflection of what we have done in the past. There exist no obligations and social rules which compel individuals to perform duties and functions against their own will. Instead they indulge themselves in several activities in order to reach their goal. They try new things. Everything one does every day has immediate reasons behind it. For example they eat carefully to maintain health, they dress consciously to suit the occasion etc. In this process of designing daily life individuals have crossed through religious and cultural boundaries and have invented new ways of living. People are indulging in experimenting with new things almost all the time. They always dream to be extraordinary and different in order to sell oneself in this competitive world. It can be very dangerous at times.

Giddens’, idea of romantic love (1992; 2) brings into discussion a very different type of relationship which is based on love and mutual understanding. The very decision to get married is constitutively different than it was before. Everyone who gets married is conscious of the fact that divorce rate are high today and the women demand greater equality than in the past. No one knows exactly, for example, what its consequences are for the future of the family or for the health of the children (Giddens and Pierson, 1998; 105). If things do not go well one can decide to separate and begin new life once
again. Divorce is always a bad time in an individual’s life which disturbs mental peace and social security yet at the same it can be regarded as one more option to begin a life once again with new hope and new dreams. It can be counted as an extra chance to rectify the mistake of choosing the wrong person. People remarry and make new attempts to build up a new family. The stepfamily is a very modern invention on this process of finding oneself. People are subjected to new and very complex kin relationships. The emergence of plastic sexuality (Giddens, 1992; 27), i.e., sexuality no longer tied to the exigencies of reproduction but to self exploration, claims Giddens, has restructuring of intimate and moral relations, in accordance with the requirements of reflexive modernity. As we shall see, this has particular significance for migration. Giddens’ contribution to social science is remarkable. His reflective modernity focuses on social changes, and links individuals to social institutions.

2.2.2 The sociology of Ulrich Beck
Ulrich Beck (1999:110) summarises reflective modernity as the approach to understand social changes through broader and better knowledge about its foundations, structures, dynamics and conflicts. This breaks religious and cultural connectivity resulting in reconstruction and restructuring of social structures and institutions. Beck talks about global process of transformation under the sub headings first modernity and second modernity. The first term, first modernity is used to describe modernity which was based on nation- states system, where social relations, networks and communities were territorial oriented, characterised more or less by collective patterns of life, progress, controllability, and full employment, and through which social consequences and self-endangerments were systematically produced, in turn producing a self defined cultural and social community. People shared common identities, and usually had a common origin, in the sense of history, ancestry, parentage or descent. Identities were formed and retained in relation to a territorial oriented nation state system. The weakening of the nation state’s influence on social and politically informed life has radically changed the nature of social life at institutionally and individual levels. Beck’s thesis rests on the assumption that societies are required to organize social life
around subjected to five different and interlinked social processes which are emergent simultaneously: they are globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment and global risk. These pillars are constitutive of what he calls second modernity.

Beck’s (1999; 120) understanding of reflexive modernity differs distinctly at one point from Giddens and Lash, whose sociology is closely connected to that of Giddens. For him the medium of reflexive modernization is not knowledge, but more or less reflexive - unawareness. He talks about unintended consequences and risks. Unintended consequences and risk arises from the human failure to predict the behaviour and nature of change. The more modern a society becomes the more unintended consequences it produces. These unintended consequences do not mean a void of accessible knowledge that is available to social actors, rather than the emergence of knowledge whose claims are controversial. This denotes a conflict of knowledge and of rationality. In a sense unawareness can be a positive factor which develops curiosity within us to know more and opens new horizons to explore new things. This, once again, exposes us to another novel type of situation. How individuals are able to respond to these situations, that is, with open curiosity or with fear and trepidation, is likely to depend, at least in part, on the features of their historical, cultural and social biographies. Again, this signifies in terms of migration.

Communism fell apart in the year 1989. Beck (1994; 07) says that every social institution has limitations and requirements. It develops and reaches saturation point. After reaching saturation point, institutions either manage to adopt an adaptive balance and maintain control for a while or undergo new changes which result in a distinctly different institution. This seems to fit what Weber claimed in his famous book “Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism”. The early 16th and 17th century was a time when society was more strictly constructed and governed by rules. Church ruled society, and Catholicism as a central authority of power. This church oriented system of society was later symbolically challenged and became dominated by a working class religion called Protestantism, with radical social effects. Globalization and
migration are daily and visible reminders that nations can not progress in absolute isolation. Today many nations around the globe are united together in a common platform to fight back global problems like terrorism, diseases, environmental crises, poverty etc. Beck says that as our societies change, new orders replace the existing ones. Beck also argues that if modernity is understood as the process of innovation which has become inevitable then it must also be accepted that modernity itself ages and will ‘come of age’.

Beck’s theory of reflective modernity focuses on political institutional changes. I feel that he is very much influenced by his biography as a German experiencing the nation-state system in Germany before the fall of Berlin wall. Politics and individual personal development go hand in hand. Political system, institutions and social rules contributes greatly in designing human daily life. I feel that his theory of reflective modernity is very much relevant in understanding history of human developments.

Giddens, Beck and Bauman exhibit common ways of analysing social processes. They are more concerned about structural changes. For them social relationships are abstract and complex. But these theorists do not talk about the class of events which occur during social encounters in an individual’s life in a society. My focus here is modernity and migration. It’s a very vast subject which covers almost every sphere of activity concerning human daily life. I feel that the study of structural changes alone is not enough to understand modernity and migration as a whole. Every minute factor matters a lot, both for immigrants and the host society. All these are important because in these daily interactions one is most aware of being a migrant. Migrants may have better access to resources and options but they need to go out in the world in order to get it. They meet new people and have to undergo several changes to melt into the system. Every moment makes them realize that they are different in many ways or special in their own way. So these daily social interactions are related to social balance, both social order or disorder.
2.3 The sociology of Ervin Goffman – Social Interaction Order

In contrast to Giddens, Beck and Bauman, Ervin Goffman is more concerned about the minute affairs of individuals’ face to face interactions in the minutiae of ordinary talk and activity in a society. Goffman (cited in Smith, 2006; 01) did not develop a school of thought or new methodological approach for the macro study of social life but instead his interests and concerns were confined to quite narrow concerns. He calls this focus on the minutiae and its implication for the self the ‘interaction order’. The subject matter which he is mostly concerned about is the class of events which occurs as a result of social co-presence.

We live in a world of social encounters wherein we are involved either in face to face or mediated contact with other individuals. Whenever we are present before others we are automatically involved to convey something of ourselves through the content of our talk, manner of our talk, our posture, our appearance, disposition etc. Even during complete silence and immobility we convey something about ourselves. This is a spontaneous process which is applicable to all places and at all times. As Goffman (1972; 65) says, talk is socially organised, not merely in terms of who speaks with whom and in what language, but as a system of mutually ratified and ritually governed face to face actions: a social encounter.

Conversation is a two ways process in which both the clients are involved in convincing one another. Healthy communicating is very important and essential. Goffman (1979; 5-6) believes that a person can communicate in the fullest sense of the term during co-presence or direct communication. There is a clear psychobiological dimension to face to face interaction during which a speaker can adjust talking accordingly to match the response of the listener. It is often said that a good speaker respects the audience response. Goffman (cited in Smith, 2006; 35-36) says that the character of the speaker is expressed unknowingly or knowing during the process of interaction. There is a flow of culture, background, identity, ethnicity, ideology, religious believes etc depending upon the time and through the manner in which acts are performed. It is possible to receive immediate response and feedbacks. This makes
interaction more flexible, interesting, productive and adjustable. Information is a very important commodity in modernity, may be more so than material resources. So it is very essential for every one to manage communicate in order to be the part of the society.

Interaction rules enact the moral code. Goffman (cited in Smith. 2006; 37) says that these rules assists individuals to ‘fit in’ i.e. to be good, and to not make a mistake. For example you know when to appreciate, when to be cheerful, when to complain etc. when you are in a group. Goffman categorizes social encounters in two different subheadings: focussed and unfocussed gatherings. In the former, individuals are a priori informed of the meeting, so that there is the possibility to rehearse, to know what to say, how to present oneself in the social environment. Business meetings, work place interactions, private parties etc are common examples. Beside these planned social gatherings, we also get involved in communicating with many people while pursuing our own line of concern. For example we speak with the stranger in the bus, train, waiting rooms, when walking on the street together etc. Here, during unfocussed interactions, individuals may feel more flexible and free in communicating because they neither have past history together nor they are so certain to meet again in the near future. They are absolutely anonymous to each other. Goffman offers a microscopic approach to understanding the significance of social institutions and the social order.

Goffman writes very carefully making proper utilization of every minute factor associated with human daily life. The social actor is a social role player in scripted social worlds, who effectively perform the drama of their role, status subjectively and so forth for the various publics that their social interactions imply. At times I felt that I was reading the same story again and again while reading his books, although I feel that the study of institutional changes, the bigger abstract, alone is not enough to understand modernity and migration as a whole. The minutiae help us to understand individuals’ reactions to the social change. We live together in a society today with people from many different countries, cultures, religions, ideas and interests. We come
across many incidents every day in which we must manage our interactions in an enscripted social setting. Goffman’s sociology is of great importance for me in terms of addressing my research question.

3. Meanings and Perspectives on Migration

Migration is an age old phenomenon associated with human civilization. It not only has a long past history but also different dimensions. Historically, incentives to migration take the form of economic forces. People have long moved to facilitate access to food and other resources. Migration like any other social institution has a strong effect on many fields of human life. It brings changes in population distribution, and brings together different cultural, racial, and religious identities. Plurality is an asset of modern society but it is a sensitive issue. In the early stage of human development people moved from one place to another in search of fertile locations in which to cultivate their food sources, sometimes seeking better places to live in and with access to other resources. Migration in the modern era displays more complex consequences and demands. The word migration today is a comprehensive term which involves both immigrants and refugees. Sometimes they are subjected to unfavourable circumstances which leave them no other option than to migrate. Others are guided by their own desire for better life opportunities and material joy. Kath Woodward (2002; 52) discusses the reasons for movement through the terms of push and pull factors. Push factors are applicable to those people who move under the situation of threat, violence, starvation etc. They lack freedom to choose, decide and react. Most of them are ready to grab any better opportunities available. War victims and political refugees are common examples of this category. Pull factors constitute the reasons for moving behind those immigrant groups who move towards that part of the city, nation or globe which can provide them better economic, social and political incentives. The early phase of post war migration, which was largely in response to labour demands at a time of full employment, is a prominent example of this type of pull migration. Today, multiple factors may be collectively associated behind the movement of people.
Beside these traditional modes of migration, modern individualistic societies have given birth to one type of migration which is different in its own way. This includes the movement of those privileged individuals who are out to explore the world, experience other ways of living and to live their dreams. This category of immigrant possesses complete freedom of movement and rights to decide. They are very much guided by the idea of individualism and autonomy which is a dominant characteristic of post-modern society. Educated and economically privileged members of individualistic West are prominent examples. Kath Woodward (2002; 52) uses the term *brain drain* to describe the contemporary movement of individuals engaging with the knowledge society, such as academics. Similarly, Zygmunt Bauman (2000) uses the term *vagabond* and *tourist* to discuss the unequal freedom of movement among migrations around the world today. Vagabond constitutes those immigrant groups who do not exercise complete freedom. They cannot travel any time any where they want instead subjected to limited alternatives before them. Tourists are more free and privileged category.

**4. Migration history of Sweden**

Sweden is a fairly new immigrant country. For a long period of time, especially in the later half of the 19th century, Sweden was a country of emigration rather than of immigration. Over a period of some 100 years, about 1.3 million Swedes migrated mostly to America to seek their fortune due to poverty, religious persecution, lack of faith in the future, political constrains, and disease (*Statistics Sweden, 1994*).

In conjunction with World War II, Sweden became more an immigrant rather than an emigrant country, so that the period after Second World War can be regarded as the modern era of immigration in Sweden. In the year 1939 when World War II broke out Sweden’s defence was in a poor condition mainly because of the reduction of the forces in 1925. The rearmament process continued through out the war (*Elis Håstad: 1958; 39*). Sweden needed immigrants to fulfil the labour demands when Swedish men were out of the labour force in order to serve for national security and defence. Sweden did not fight in the war, and did not suffer post war syndrome. Instead the post
The war period saw the wind of prosperity blowing over the country as the economy flourished. During Second World War approximately 70,000 Finnish children were evacuated to Sweden. The inflow of immigrants accelerated in the year 1933 when Nazi-Germany attacked Denmark and Norway. In the year 1940 around 18,000 foreign born people lived in Sweden, with residence permits: 4,500 were Germans which constituted the largest foreign born population. The number of immigrants increased rapidly within a few years, the majority being from the neighbouring countries of Norway and Denmark (Jan Ekberg: 2003; 11-12). In December 1944 around 180 000 refugees were registered in Sweden. Among them around 80 000 were war victims Finnish population (Elis Hästad: 1958; 44). They were evacuated war victims, children and women and constituted the biggest group of immigrants at that time. Other major groups of immigrants were from Denmark, Norway and Baltic States, i.e. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (Jan Ekberg: 2003; 12). Soon after the war the majority of the refugees from Denmark, Norway and Finland returned home, but most of the refugees from the Baltic States remained in Sweden. The greatest inflow if immigrants occurred within five years period after World War II, the majority being from Nordic countries, and having at least some similar cultural characteristics. The total number of Norwegian immigrants increased by almost 50%, the number of Danish refugees almost doubled and the number of Finnish refugees increased by almost three fold. Along with these there was a considerable increase in the number of refugees from Germany and Austria.

During the 1950s, together with the Nordic citizens the inflow of labour immigrants from Germany, Austria and Italy increased rapidly, and again in 1960s from Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey (Statistic Year book 1970, table 51). The majority of them worked in Swedish industries, service sectors like hotels, restaurants etc. and women in textile industries. In the year 1947 Sweden signed a bilateral agreement with Italy and Hungary to facilitate the active recruitment of non-Nordic immigrants. Similarly in the year 1950 the Swedish Labour Market Board collaborated with West Germany, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands and Austria to recruit labour. The flow of immigration accelerated, and unemployment among native Swedish began to be an
important subject of discussion. Sweden in the year 1968 introduced a policy which demanded the attainment of a work permit in order to enter the county to work. Despite this, almost 80 000 Finnish residents migrated to Sweden in 1969-1970 when Finland suffered grave economic and financial crises (Ahrne & Roman & Franzén: 2000; 89).

An economic slowdown in the beginning of 1970s was responsible for rising unemployment among certain groups like youths, women, immigrants and the physically challenged. One of the reasons for this was the increasing competition from abroad. Ship building and textile industries, which were previously high growth sectors, struggled against strong competition. Many such sectors either decreased production or totally collapsed, with the result of a decrease in immigration to Sweden. Greek refugee immigrants were a significant source of the Swedish immigrant population at the end of 1960s when Greeks sought asylum after the military takeover in Greece. During 1973-1980 (Swedish Migration board official website) asylum seekers mainly came from Latin America and after 1980s humanitarian immigrants from Middle East countries made their way to Sweden.

In the year 1951, Sweden became a signatory in the United Nations “The 1951 Refugee Convention”. ‘The 1951 Refugee Convention’ was designed partly to solve the problems of many World War II refugees still scattered across Europe. Sweden provided asylum for Soviet Union and Warsaw Pack countries’ escaped populations. Later, in the year 1968 when Prague was taken over by the Soviet Union, thousands of Czech refugees sought asylum in Sweden. In the year 1954 (Charles Westin, 2006) the Nordic countries set up a common labour market which enabled large scale immigrants from Finland to move to Sweden. In the year the 1998 United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) on Iraq withdrew its entire staff from Iraq, over the ‘weapons inspection’ dispute. By 2000 Iraqi refugees became the largest immigrant group in Sweden, a sector which is rapidly increasing. According to Statistics Sweden (2007), immigration in the year 2006 and 2007 reached its highest level since records began. Returning Swedish citizens, Iraqis war victims, and new European member state migrants are prominent groups of immigrants in Sweden today.
4.1 Perspectives on Migration in Sweden

The United Nations Report on Global Immigration (*Trends in total migration stock: the 2005 revision*) reports that between 1960 and 2005 the number of international migrants in the world more than doubled, passing from an estimated 75 million in 1960 to almost 191 million in 2005 - an increase of 121 million in 45 years. In the year 2005, international migrants constituted nearly 3% of the world’s population.

For the most part the inflow of immigrants after the war in Sweden was based on economic factors. Even political victims and war refugees preferred Sweden above other possible host countries on economic grounds (*Svenberg and Runblom; 1989*). Immigrants who came to Sweden during and immediately after the war period managed to find jobs and earn their own bread. Many jobs did not demand prior experience and technical knowledge. They did not have a common language in which to communicate, but despite this they managed to keep at least in part a particular narrative going, because of the possibility to work and secure an economically sustainable future. Giddens (*1991*) concept of the importance of a coherent narrative in relation to today’s modern society is more complex. It does not just mean the economic health of the people but infers also the ability to manage to be the part of a pluralistic society, to live together with many others and the cultural and religious diversity that this brings. Many immigrants fail to survive in today’s competitive and changing job market and are dependent on the state for living. Some theorists claim that it is not the production and exchange of material goods that is the valued economic resource in modern societies, but the production and exchange of knowledge, and the ability to identify and react quickly to opportunities, or to ‘walk on quick sand’ as Bauman calls it. Some immigrants have experienced and witnessed enormous psychological and emotional trauma in their home lands, and although they may be keen to start a new life, secure their future for themselves and their families and pick up and maintain their narrative, they need support and assistance *and time* in order to learn language skills, regain a sense of emotional security and harmony, and to be able to participate in the global society and their host country. For some, their cultural backgrounds are so different from that of their host country that they must
learn new cultural scripts, and what Bourdieu calls ‘embodied practices’. Much of this involves competence in the everyday social interaction situations of which Goffman writes in his sociology.

From the very first day in the host country immigrants are involved in communicating and learning. Many have to go through a series of eligibility tests and screening procedures in order to prove that they are ‘genuine’ and are in real need of support and solidarity, and not opportunists who are out to contribute to society rather than merely draw on its resources. They have to convey that they are grateful for the support and solidarity and will contribute to maintain the social order. Everything that they do, every minute aspect, even small ‘mistakes’ are important in structuring the experience of new ways of living in a different cultural setting. They are a part of the society yet they are different in many ways. So for a deeper understanding of the globalized society one needs to consider even these small ‘happenings’ occurring at a societal level thousands of times a day, and routinely and unexpectedly in an individual life in a society, beside bigger social institutions, such as immigration policies, and the social institutions such as schools, workplaces, religion and the family.

In the year 2006 Sweden granted residence permits to 86 436 immigrants. Among them 31% were granted residence permits on the grounds of family ties (Swedish Migration board, 2006). This represents a different type of immigration in Sweden today, and in some senses may be considered to be immigration which is motivated not on economic grounds, but on biographical and social grounds. Additionally, the movement of students within the European Union, as well as the movement into the EU of students from the developing world who are sponsored to live and study for a period in Europe, is endorsed as a positive and productive training process. In some ways it could be considered to be an investment in the new generation which will be responsible for keeping the global society’s narrative going, by ensuring that there is a flexible and highly skilled workforce, able to quickly adapt to change. Sweden also has a few Norwegian and Danish citizens who live in Sweden and work in their own
country. Normally they live in those parts of Sweden which are close to their own country or within a manageable distance to travel on daily basis.

Migration can be either domestic or international, and in the case of Sweden it is overwhelmingly international migration which signifies most socially, culturally and economically. In other countries, such as India, domestic migration is both more common and more socially significant, largely for the particular political history of India, which brings vast cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and brings into light the question of identity, and also racial tensions. We can take for instance, the case of Bangladeshi immigrants into The East End of London who came to London initially as a result of political disruption and change in India and established an economic trade presence in UK, but subsequently and due to shifts in domestic welfare policy in the UK, on the basis of migration on the grounds of familial ties, the Bangladeshi population in the East End of London constitutes a near majority of the overall population.

4.2 Migration and associated policy in Sweden
The historic analysis of Swedish immigration politics is important in understanding the factors behind the vigorous inflow of immigrants. Unlike the other European countries Sweden already had a policy of permanent immigration during the periods of labour migration. This provided a greater sense of security among those who had work in Sweden, and a better income than they were used to. The increasing cultural and ethnic diversity in Sweden gave way to the 1979 constitutional amendment which provided equal rights to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, providing constitution safeguards and encouraged the possibility to maintain and develop minority cultures and rituals. The government of Sweden also realised the need for special schools in which immigrants could learn the Swedish language, and was discussed in national educational plan in 1971. Later in 1973 special language schools for immigrants SFI (Swedish for immigrants) was introduced. In 1985 the Swedish Immigration Board which was responsible for handling asylum applicants was assigned responsibility for integrating the newly arrived immigrants. The government of Sweden introduced an
18 month introduction scheme for newly arrived immigrants to provide social assistance and general information on life in Sweden. Immigrants were granted assistance to learn the language, undertake professional training, and were given a general introduction to the Swedish society. After 1991 the government provided financial assistance as living support for immigrants during the period of introduction, valid for a minimum of 24 months (Lematre: 2007; 14-16).

In 1951 Swedish law guaranteed total religious freedom. Today every one has the right to belong (or not to belong) to any religious body. As a result religious diversity in Sweden has increased. During the 70’s and 80’s many Middle East Christian orthodox Syrians sought asylum in Sweden on religious grounds. Kurdish from Eastern Turkey, Iranians and Iraqis are other major groups of immigrant in Swedish history, attracted by the possibility of religious freedom. In the early 1990s the flow of immigrants from Bosnia Herzegovinian, Croatia, Macedonia and Kosovo increased dramatically. Also during the 1990 the government of Sweden introduced a policy of visa probation. In 1975 foreign nationals who had been living in Sweden for three years or more received the right to vote in local and regional elections.

The Swedish Labour Market Board introduced a programme of ‘workplace introduction’ for immigrants in 2003-2005 to help them find employment. The objective behind the project was to assist immigrants who have problems entering the labour market, particularly because of lack of Swedish work experience. Women, especially from developing nations, are recognized as having major problems adapting to the Swedish way of life, which involves women being a part of the labour market. Every Swedish citizen and every legal immigrant living in Sweden may make use of the welfare system. The Swedish welfare state, common known as Swedish model has attracted great attention among political scientists and politicians world wide. The major goal of the welfare state is to provide every citizen with human daily needs like education, food, housing, medical assistance etc. Special programmes such as that above is an expression of the policy of universality behind the Swedish welfare model.
Policies are abstract, non concrete and often serve ideological as well as public welfare and service functions. Policies can, among other things, serve the purpose of transmitting the image that it would like the citizens of the nation state, other nation states, or the world to have of the country as a system of ideas. Policies require interpretation and sets of practices in order to involve its citizens, and this is achieved at the face to face level in many cases. This links macro and micro approaches to sociological understandings of an empirical case, such as migration.

5. The Sociological significance of migration

The process of becoming a migrant is addressed increasingly today. One aspect focuses on the fact that migrants have to convince other social actors that they are genuine refugees, not opportunists. This is related to the increase in terror attacks, and ethnicity framed social violence and problems have made issues relating migrants more ‘sensitive’. The transmission of these attacks and reports of violence is made possible by a globalized communication network, and its ability to produce and spread particular types of information. For the migrant, melting into society can be difficult.

Migrant groups face major challenges and adjustments when they become migrants. Giddens’ idea of the importance of maintaining a coherent narrative is useful here. On the one hand, the possibility to imagine a continuing narrative requires both connection to the past and a connection to the future, and this can be through hope, especially if the migrant is a refugee. When everything is unfamiliar and strange, even the most simple of daily interactions, an individual can easily ‘get lost’ in this new social setting, different culture, language, lifestyle, and the process of relocating self can be tedious and challenging, as well as exciting and full of hope, and knowing how to make the most of the opportunities can be overwhelming. Immigrant women especially from countries with traditional male centred cultures experience major changes in the western democratic atmosphere (Sassen, 2000). In a country like Sweden with its high incidence of women employed in the workforce, women’s involvement in regular wage work and improved access to other public realms has had a strong impact on their gender relations and the family’s condition, and it is also a
social ideal. From the host country perspective, giving women immigrants this opportunity may be considered a way of assisting in restructuring power distribution in a family in a more democratic manner, and assisting women migrants to ‘fit in’ to western democratic life. In this sense, ‘becoming’ a migrant for a woman may involve ‘becoming’ a woman who is a stranger to herself. Migrant women respond to this in different ways: some prefer their previous domestic and private identity, some choose to take the opportunity to ‘become’ someone or something else.

Most of the service industry jobs in the west are carried out by women, especially immigrants and women from minority ethnic groups. On the one hand some critics argue that this is a source of deepening and widening the gap in global and gender inequalities, and some others say that this is an opportunity for women to enter public life. For women themselves, they may fear where this new life may take them, for instance, to moral corruption, but they may feel curious and interested, or compelled to undertake this opportunity for the welfare of their family. This type of employment, although operating in the public sphere, is much like the domestic work that women do in the home, and women may be more able to find employment in their host country than men, for this reason, and this may be heavy with consequence within and outside the family. Recently, as reported in The Copenhagen Post (16 March 2007), Denmark suffered violence because of bad integration of Islamic immigrants, constituting 8% of the country’s population today. Denmark’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to this by identifying that there is a ‘clash of values’, and a number of cultural barriers continue to slow the process of integration. For example many immigrants still continue to hold views about gender roles that clash with ‘mainstream’ Denmark.

In bigger cities especially, people spend major parts of their life involved in ‘unfocussed’ situations, where they are not able to ‘rehearse’ their interactions. Migrants are a characteristic of big cities. In this way migrants and natives manage on a daily basis unfocussed interactions. But to live in a society is not just to live through face to face interactions. It is also about how these signify in the greater social and the moral whole. Interactions, both focussed and unfocussed, in different ways demand
certain moral competencies from social actors. Such interactions bring people, and their competencies, in proximity with one another and make migration ‘real’. Social interactions have moral consequences both at individual and wider level. Our single behaviour can make the difference at the level of society. The increase in population in cities is where individuality and individual freedom are most expanded. This freedom becomes meaningful only when individuals manage to understand it relating to social and moral obligations. Cities can be volatile places for this reason.

Violence, particularly so called racial violence associated with religious extremism, and particularly in large cities, has attracted much media attention today. Emile Durkheim’s (1915) theory regarding the role of religion in a society is of great relevance to migration today. Durkheim linked religion to fear, despair and violence, through his idea that people react with fear and anger when ‘sacred objects’ are violated, and that this has the effect of disrupting the social order. His idea was that religion provided a common platform which emotionally attached people together, as well as providing a set of rules which assists and guides members to perform daily duties, and thus ensures some certainty and predictability in life. Any type of ‘foreign’ interference can make people feel threatened and suppressed, generating situations of dissatisfaction and fear. The fear can be from outside sources or from within, that is fear of losing control over ones own sphere of control and influence. In a country like Sweden which has a policy which encourages religious freedom, although religious practice may be allowed by the state, there are challenges from outside sovereign power and licence and these can be most felt in daily interactions, through people’s responses to religious practices and dress, for example. If an individual is afraid of his/her family being influenced by new cultural settings, he/she may put limitations on various activities, and exercise increasingly control over family members, sometimes with extreme consequences. Honour related violence is such an example. Fadime from Turkey, Sara from Iraq, Pele from Kurdistan (Wikan, 2003) are a few women among many other immigrant women who had to pay with their lives for being involved in activities outside those of the family rules in Sweden. Honour related violence is not just the Islamic problem. It is present in almost every culture in different ways.
Global migration is by some regarded as only benefitting marginal sections of the society– the educated and privileged urban populations. Saskia Sassen (2000) in an article “The global city: strategic site/new frontier” brings into discussion the situation of inequality in global societies today. The geography of globalization contains both a dynamic of dispersal and of centrality. Inequality in the profit making capabilities of different sectors of the economy is prominent. Industries with broader international markets make major profits but those small industries which mostly rely on family labour are forced to survive on limited profits, minimal safety and poor health standards, in order to survive in the global competition. From the immigrants’ point of view, especially those from poor countries, there are advantages in the sense that host societies have a lot more to offer them compared with the country of their origin. However, not all immigrants are immediately able to contribute to the society, due to traumatic conditions under which they migrated, poor health, language and cultural factors, and underemployment and unemployment are features of immigration.

These are some of the aspects of immigration that sociologists are interested in, and these will now be discussed in terms of ‘becoming’ a migrant, and ‘becoming’ a host country.

6. Discussion
Immigration and ethnicity are often constituted as otherness. They are processes whereby global elements are localized, international labour markets are constituted and cultures from different localities and nations are brought together. I think the main cause behind migration is inequalities of opportunities. Becoming a migrant, in the first place means to begin the new life in a different cultural setting. It’s not only the plain physical displacement and replacement, but involves massive emotional attachments with your own culture, people, places etc. Modern society today means that we belong to a new and novel nation not identified by blood or ancestry but by a set of shared ‘ideas’ and ideals.
One of the consequences of the ‘knowledge’ revolution is that opens opportunities for new forms of elites and memberships. Class membership and the sacred right of only people occupying these memberships and the unquestioned right to access the surplus is no longer relevant. Since knowledge is the valued resources and not linked to elites, the rules of the game are more open for individuals to come in from outside and benefit. It opens the door for new ideas, new technology, and manpower. We belong to a complex society and live more with strangers, and uncertainty of social continuity. The inflow and outflow of the people is very high. We lack knowledge and details about each other. This lack of knowledge can develop confusions and raise questions of various sorts. People are often not sure whom to trust and whom to avoid. It may develop a situation of insecurity, fear, jealousy, envy etc among people, and this can be mediated at the level of social interactions, and can cause tension, violence, as well as cohesion, or isolation. Georg Simmel’s sociology of social types is relevant here (cited in Kurt Wolff, 1950), and particularly his idea of the term stranger. He uses the term stranger to describe those people who have moved from the place of their origin and are settled down in another place. In Simmel’s terminology the stranger is not only a wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow but those who come today and stays tomorrow. They are an element of the society already but are not fully part of it. They bring in new ideas. There are reasons which make them different from non strangers. They can have the effect of consolidating social bonds between the native dwellers.

C. Wright Mills in his book “The Sociological Imagination” (1959) explored the relationship between various historical events and social activities, and he linked public issues to personal problems. The male parent who becomes a migrant may experience rebellion from his children, and he may become in his own imagination or in those of others, someone who is capable of extreme violence. His ‘becoming’ this person is as much because of the fear that he feels for his loss of control over his family, and for the fear that he feels of western morality, but also because ‘the war on terror’, and ‘honour killings’ have become ‘public issues’. His unfamiliarity with the host culture is obvious through social interactions. Goffman’s ideas are important here because it draws our attention towards individuals’ daily activities which engage them through other social actors, and is able to explain how despite freedom of religious
expression, ethnic and religious violence is possible. Similarly Simmel (cited in Farganis, 1993) also uses this concept to link particular forms of interaction between individuals with enormous wider sociological significance. He says that the mode and type of communication varies depending upon the number of individuals involved in it. The interaction between two persons can be relatively straightforward, where each individual can present themselves to the other in a way that maintains their identity. But in larger groups, the interaction changes and can lead to situations of competition, alliances, which can isolate one individual and at the same time increase cohesion against a sole individual. ‘National’ identity practices can increase in response to the presence of an outsider, and this can mean that governments are required to respond to individuals and groups who may make demands on the government to govern in different ways.

Some regard migration as a force destroying local cultures and traditions, widening world inequalities and worsening the lot of the impoverished, creating a world of winners and losers with a few on the fast track to prosperity and the rest condemned to a life of misery and despair. As Beck points out, the modern world unites us all in managing major challenges of technological development, global risks, the gender revolution, globalization, but how we respond to these challenges depends in part on other features of our biography such as gender, class, racial and ethnicity identities, our psychological dispositions and the particular opportunities, both through formal institutions and less formal ones, offered by the host country, combine to give us different ways of seeing and reacting to these challenges. Immigration is a major historical reality, but in its immediacy it is an integral part of, and influences how societies continue to grow and change in population and diversity. It’s a very complex phenomenon which influences both sending and receiving societies, and requires an approach that takes into account daily life situations, seemingly minor things that occur within our daily localities, but also social institutions. Within these daily interactions, and daily practices, both individuals and societies adapt and adjust through a process of becoming which is never complete. Sociological studies provide systematic study of social interactions, institutions and identities. It considers how our
selves, relationships and actions are shaped by society, and how society itself is structured and changed in turn. As Beck claims, it may be that this process of adaptation and change, of becoming, may continue until a dramatic event or shift occurs and then the process of becoming will begin again.

7. Concluding comments

Becoming a migrant or a host country will involve a variety of processes and adaptations, and challenges, and involves different reasons for immigration, and different narrative tracks. For example migration within Scandinavian where there are less differences in culture, religion, and equilibrated access to social resources, technology and information etc. may mean that individuals manage to be the part of the society more easily than those immigrants from other parts of the globe. I feel that the process of accepting and adopting begins from the very first moment in a new society. The one who comes in also brings in new cultural perspectives, new ideologies and beliefs. This establishes the background of plurality which has both positive and negative consequences.

My background as an immigrant contributes a lot in understanding the factors associated with the process of becoming a migrant. My background as a political science graduate has encouraged me to think about power as operating through sovereign forms of power, but my daily experience tells me that every minute incident in social interaction is very important in forming an identity which governs us in understanding the new cultural setting. For this reason I wanted to approach my case using both macro and micro sociological perspectives and theories. I would like to conclude by saying that migration has both positive and negative dimensions: positive in the way in which it offers us to opportunities but at the same time society becomes very sensitive. Becoming migrant is a long and tedious process which demands adjustments and modifications from both ‘native’ and immigrant populations to maintain balance in a society.
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