

# International Migration Flow and Network Analysis From 1950-2015: The Case of Five Selected Countries

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## Abstract

Migrations stands on the top of many countries policy agenda. It is the prominent feature in the economics, social and political landscape of many countries in the world. This research has been conducted to analyze migration trends of five countries such as Ethiopia, Israel, USA, Mexico and Saudi Arabia using net migration data, GDP per capita and migration matrix data obtained from United Nation data base. The migration network has been analyzed using country's origin and destination and further this study explains why people migrate to different countries. To achieve the objective of this research, secondary data have been employed. The major findings of the study are: even though countries experiencing economic growth or GDP, people still migrating from these countries because of many reasons such as geographical proximity of countries, colonial history, cultural, social network, ideological and religious similarity. Furthermore, push and pull factors as macro motives can also explain the migration process between or among countries.

**Keywords:** International Migration, Social Capital theory, New Economics migration theory, Migration Network

## 1. Introduction

In modern world history, mass long distance migrations have been an important issue. A global perspective on migration provides insights not only into the global reaches of an expanding industrial economy, but also into how this integrative economy grew concurrently with political and cultural forces that favored fragmentation into nations, races, and perceptions of distinct cultural regions (McKeown, 2004). According to Massey (1999), the modern history of international migration can be classified in to four periods: Mercantile period, from 1500 to 1800, world immigration flows were dominated by Europeans so that they inhabited most parts of Americas, Oceania, Africa and Asia. The second period of emigration, industrial period, began early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and stemmed from the economic development of Europe and the spread of industrialization to former colonies in the New World. During this period, more than 48 million people left the industrializing countries of Europe in search of new lives in the Americas and Oceania. The third period of emigration, period of limited migration, brought European emigration to an abrupt because of the outbreak of WWI, the Great Depression and the restrictive immigration laws passed by the USA. The fourth period of emigration is postindustrial migration. During this time migration became a global phenomenon as the number and variety of sending and receiving countries increased and the global supply of immigrants shifted from Europe to developing countries.

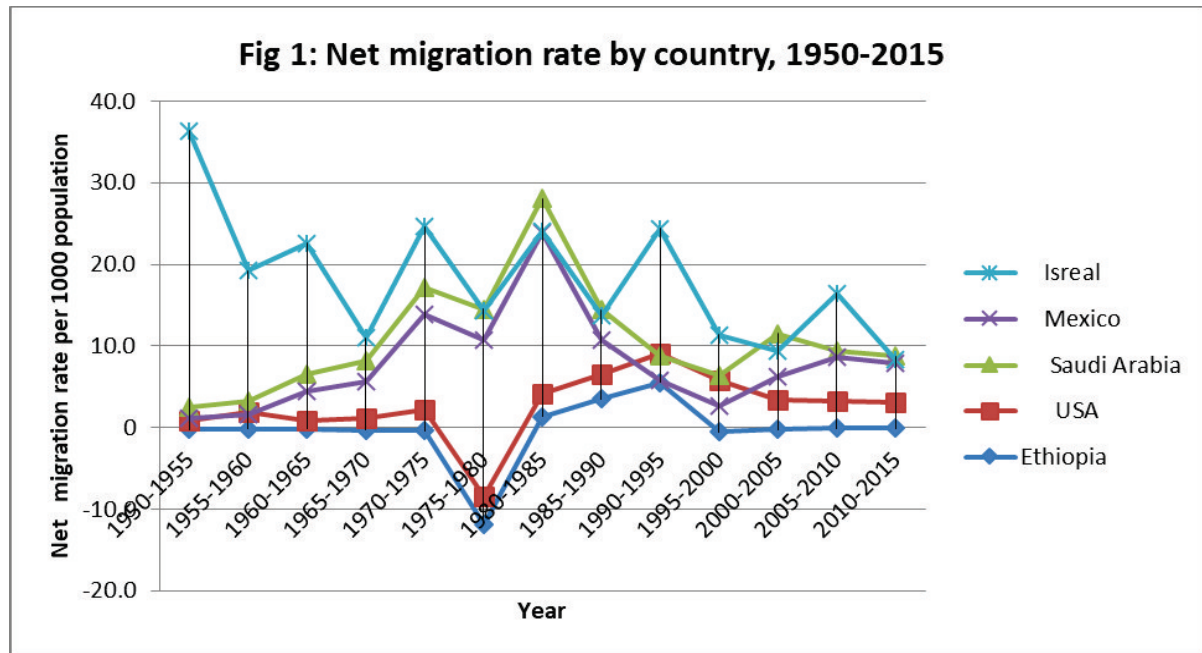
When we see the trend of world migration history, it is changing over time. Countries which have been migrant sending became migrant receiving in different periods with different reasons. The trend and reasons can be discussed on the basis of different international migration theories. Therefore, I would like to discuss the international migration trends of five countries such as Israel, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia and USA with respect to net migration data, GDP per capita and migration matrix along with facts.

## 2. Data Source

This research is mainly done based on secondary data which is from United Nation data base (2013) about countries GDP per capita and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015)-World Population Prospects about countries net migration accessed and provided by Corvinus University of Budapest, Institute of Sociology and Social Policy. The analysis of the data is also supported by literature review. For the migration matrix i.e to see the stability of the mobility of migrants by country of origin and destination, I have used the first three years such as 1990, 2000 and 2010.

## 3. Net migration rate by country, 1950-2015

Figure 1 below presents net migration rate of Israel, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, USA and Ethiopia between 1950 and 2015. According to the figure, Israel, Saudi Arabia and USA have been migrant receiving countries and the remaining countries Ethiopia and Mexico have been migrant sending countries. Some countries are sending and others are receiving with different reasons. Therefore, I would like to make an investigation on the net migration of the above mentioned countries.



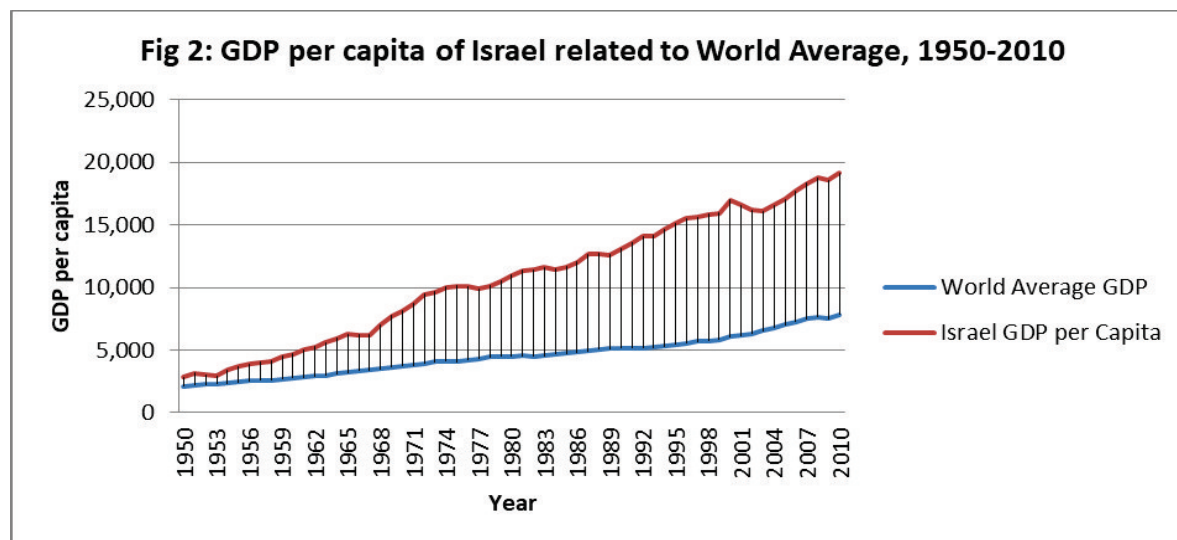
Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision

### 3.1. Israel

The net migration rate of Israel has always been positive between 1950 and 2015. This means that the number of immigrants has always exceeded the number of emigrants. However, the migration balance has a fluctuating trend, growing in certain periods and decreasing in others. It has historical reason because this trend reflects both patterns of Jews immigration, which resulted more consistent in the 1950s and 1960s and the Palestinian emigration from Israel.

From 1950-1955, Israel has received an unprecedented volume of Jews immigration, which is represented by 35.2 percent of net migration rate. This exceptionally high volume of immigration within short period of time, i.e, five years interval, has reflected many factors. First, there was huge number of Jews in many European countries, many of whom were in refugee camps and for whom immigration to Israel was the only political alternative. In addition, there were many Jews in Arab countries who wanted to migrate to Jewish state because of religious and political ideology. Here, I would also like to mention the Ethiopian Jews called Bete Israel (House of Israel) who has migrated to Israel. There was no mass emigration from Ethiopia by the Beta Israel after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, as with other Jewish communities. Until 1980, about 250 Beta Israel managed to reach Israel. Finally, in 1984-5, Operation Moses took place, in which 7,700 Beta Israel were airlifted from the Sudan to Israel. International pressure, and in particular the intervention of American Jewish organizations advocating to “rescue” the Beta Israel, built up, culminating in Operation Solomon, which brought 14,310 Jews out to Ethiopia to Israel in 1991 (Weil, 2009).

Second, Israel promulgated ‘Law of Return’ in 1950, which necessitated unlimited entrance of Jews into Israel. After this, the immigration rate has declined and varied between low and moderate in different years. From 1990 -1995, the net migration rate of Israel has again increased from 3 percent to 18.6 percent. This is because of the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 gave new emphasis to Jewish immigration.



Source: United Nations database, 2013

The above figure 2 shows the GDP per capita of Israel with respect to the world average. From the figure, we can clearly see that the Israel GDP per capita is above the world average and it has an increasing trend since 1950 to 2015. This increment of GDP of the country may be one of the reasons to accommodate migrants from different countries. As country's economy increase, they will be put under target by migrants, particularly economic migrants as a potential source of income.

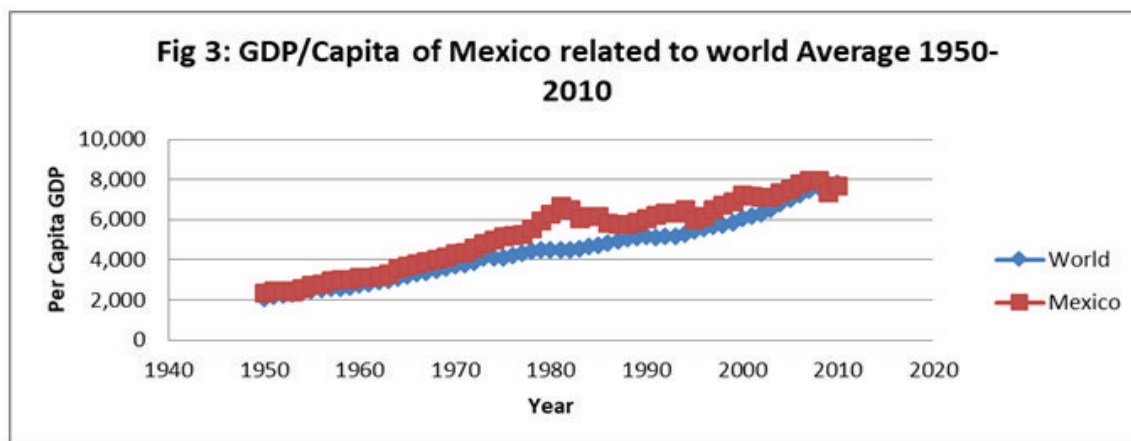
### 3.1.1. Major Israeli Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination

The top five migrant sending countries to Israel by country of origin in 1990, 2000 & 2010 are Russian Federation, Ukraine, Morocco, Romania and Poland (See Appendix B, Column A). The migration matrix is stable in the above mentioned years of migration. After the formation of modern Israel, many people from the above mentioned countries are migrating to Israel since they have the same religion, culture and ideology. For example, *Aliyah* is an important Jewish cultural concept and a fundamental component Zionism. It is enshrined in Israel's Law of return, which accords any Jew (deemed as such by halakha and/or Israeli secular law) and eligible non-Jews (a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew), the legal right to assisted immigration and settlement in Israel, as well as Israeli citizenship. Therefore, this facilitates and instigates people from the above mentioned countries to migrate to Israel.

Even though Israel is receiving migrants from different countries, it has been also sending its migrants to different countries such as Palestine, UK & North Ireland, USA, Canada and Germany in the years 1990, 2000 and 2010 (See Appendix B, Column B). There are factors that instigate them to migrate to these countries among them race is the one. There are Israeli Americans, Israeli Germany, and UK, for example, who make migration process simple. Israeli migrants are migrating to USA for example because of the war with Palestine (during 1990s) and the high tax and lack of housing available in their homeland is some of the reasons that pushed Israelis to migrate to USA.

### 3.2. Mexico

According to Figure 1, for the last 65 years, Mexico has experienced negative net migration. There are different factors that could explain the reason why Mexico is migrant sending country and the phenomenon in which the net migration is negative all the time. Even though Mexico's per capita GDP is above the world average (see figure 3 below), the net migration rate of the country is remained negative. However, on 2010, the GDP per capita of Mexico has got below the world average because of the world economic crisis.



Source: United Nations database, 2013

There are many responsible factors which can clearly elaborate why the net migration has remained negative. First, the expansion of the direct foreign investment of USA in Mexico creates a mobile population prone to migration in different countries, notably to USA. In order for Mexico to receive any investment, Mexico had to open its market to American businesses, something that did not occur in Mexico until the 1982 Debt Crisis. As a result, foreign direct investment by American corporations, for example has increased significantly in Mexico from 2,549,000,000 dollars in 1990 to 9,526,290,000 dollars in 1995 and reached 18,110,008,381 dollars in 2000 (Steger and Roy 2010). This argument has also supported by Saskia Sassen (1990) that the expansion of manufacturing and export agriculture has mobilized new segments of the population into migration because it disrupts the traditional work structure. In addition, she added that the development of commercial agriculture, which is almost completely for agriculture, has directly displaced small farmers who are left without means of subsistence. This forces them to migrate.

Second, Mexicans are migrating because of the push and pull factors. According to the neoclassical and new economics of international migration theories, international migration is caused by geographical differences in the supply of and demand for labor. In order to get good wage, Mexicans may migrate to different countries where there is job opportunities and good working environment. In order to reduce the relative deprivation of their families compared with some other families, Mexicans may use migration as a best strategy.

Third, it is through the unequal exchange between the United States and Mexico that best explains why there was such an increase in the number of Mexican immigrants to the United State. World-Systems theory looks at immigration as a process that occurs for the benefit of the United States since capitalist systems travel through a cycle of economic downturn that can be overturned through cheap, dependable, and exploitable labor from the developing world (Cheng and Bonacich 1984). World-Systems also points to the exploitation of the developing nations by the developed nations through the unequal exchange that leads to continual dependence (Wallerstein 2004). The movement of Mexican immigrants can be explained by the unequal exchange between the United States and Mexico, which benefitted the United States at the expense of the Mexican laborer once in the US labor force. According to world system theory in addition, people migrate to specific countries due to the relational ties that those countries hold with their home countries. In Latin America, the United States has had a strong presence both politically and economically. Mexico is a clear example of such influence. In addition, Mexicans are also migrating to Spain, their former colonies. The link that was created during the colonialism period has been contributing for the facilitation of international migration.

Fourth, Mexico has a geographical location to move to the US to secure jobs that are not occupied the native people because of the attitude of the native people towards some jobs-regarded as migrant jobs. Therefore, these jobs are filled by those who can accept the low wage and the poor working conditions-migrants are the only people who are ready to accept this offer. This is occurred because of the segmented labor market in the US. The secondary labor markets always require migrants since it is not demanded by the native labor. On the top of that, Saskia Sassen (1990) has argued also that the downgrading industries in the US are looking for cheap labor to survive. So, migrants from different countries particularly from Mexico have been occupying these industries. Furthermore, since there are Mexican migrants who have business in the USA, they can attract cheap migrants from Mexico. This works because they do have social network so that migrants can use this network as an opportunity to access jobs easily.

### 3.2.1. Major Mexican Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination

From Appendix D, Column A, we can understand that USA, Guatemala and Spain are the major three migrant sending countries to Mexico. In addition to these countries, Argentina, El Salvador and Panama were also important migrant sources to Mexico in the above time periods. The geographical location, direct foreign

investment and the history of colonialism could explain the migration link of these countries. Since both Mexico and Guatemala were colonies of Spain, they can speak the same language and there were also Guatemala communities in Mexico who were settled as refugee during Guatemala civil war. The USA has also huge investment in Mexico since there is cheap labor force. These could facilitate the migration rate of these countries to Mexico. When we see the migration matrix, it is stable from 1990 to 2010; at least USA, Mexico and Spain were the dominant.

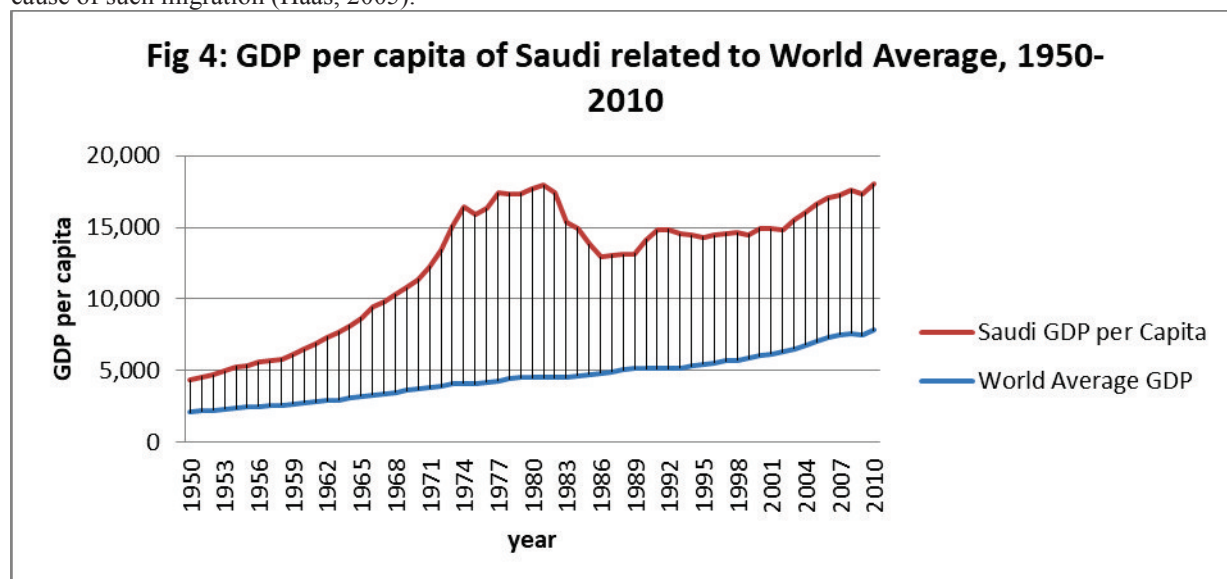
Mexico has been also migrant receiving country from different countries such as USA, Guatemala, El Salvador, Spain, Argentina and Spain (See Appendix D, Column B). Geographical proxy, language, Colonial history and Direct foreign investment can be taken as an important factors that can answer the question why people from these countries migrating to Mexico.

### 3.3. Saudi Arabia

From figure 1 above, we can clearly understand that except 1990-1995, the net migration rate of Saudi Arabia is remained positive. The Gulf War of 1991 sparked a series expulsion of workers from the country. This made the net migration rate of the country negative. This implies that, except the above mentioned year of interval, the country has been receiving migrants from many countries. Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Egypt and Philippines can be taken as the leading top five migrant sending countries to Saudi Arabia (See appendix E). The reasons can be explained from the economic, political and religious perspectives.

From the figure above, we can also understand that from 1980-1985, the net migration rate of Saudi Arabia has also reached its maximum i.e. 23 because of the world price of oil, which had peaked in 1980 at over US\$35 per barrel. It is because of the economic situation which was demanding labor made the net migration very high during 1980-1985. One of the wealthiest countries in the Middle East, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is also one of the largest exporters of oil. Despite this, more than 50 per cent of the work force in the Saudi Arabia is migrant workers (FIDH, 2003).

Although the Saudi sponsorship system, *kafala*, often results in gross human rights abuse, labor migrants are keep on migrating to the country (Burke and Echagüe, 2009). The system is highly criticized by many organizations like human rights watch. The contract becomes a legally binding obligation that Saudi law frequently protects, regardless of the abuses committed by an employer against an individual. As a result of this system, workers' rights are at the discretion of their employer, who holds their passport, and therefore, their freedom of movement. Migrant workers often come from countries rife with poverty, where remittances offer hope not only to worker's families, but also to the economy of their native country. It was estimated by the World Bank that in 2003, more than \$116 billion, not including transfers sent through informal channels, was sent home by way of remittances from migrant workers to labor-sending countries (Haas, 2005). The sense of relative deprivation in the form of global inequality of development and job opportunity is frequently the leading cause of such migration (Haas, 2005).



Source: United Nations database, 2013

Another reason could be the economy of Saudi Arabia. The GDP per capita of Saudi Arabia is above the world average (see figure 4 above) so that I would say that it can accommodate as much migrant as possible. On the top of that as segmented labor market theory argue that the negative qualities that people in Saudi Arabia attach to low-wage jobs may open up employment opportunities to migrant workers.

### **3.3.1. Major Saudi Arabia Migration Network by country of Origin and Destination**

Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Egypt and Philippines are the top five major sending countries to Saudi Arabia 1990, 2000 and 2010 (see Appendix E, Column A). In these three years, the migration matrix is stable. Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest oil exporting countries in the world and the labor market of the country is dominated by these countries. These migrants are economic migrants from Asia and this can be explained by pull and push migration theories.

Saudi Arabia migrants do have also many destination countries in different parts of the world such as USA, Canada, Palestine, Libya and UK and Northern Ireland. For different economic activities or due to some cultural and religious similarity people from these countries may migrate to Saudi Arabia.

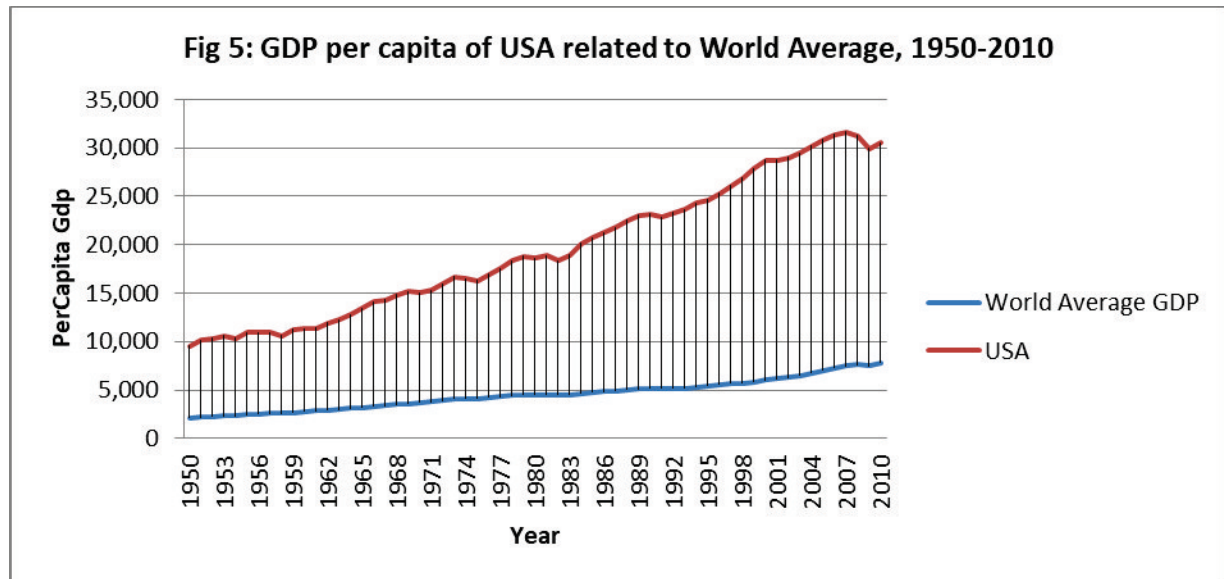
### **3.4. USA**

From the year 1950 to 2015, USA has continued to be migrant receiving countries. The positive net migration rate of the country validates this fact (Fig 1 above). As to the reason why people migrate to USA can be clearly explained by different international migration theories.

As Saskia Sassen discussed in her article about the rise of global cities and the new labor demand, the concentration of servicing and management functions in global cities has contributed to conditions for the demand and absorption of the immigrant influx in US cities like New York and Los Angeles. In these global cities, the job supply is shaped by several key trends, notably the growth of the advanced service sector, including the financial system and the shrinking of traditional manufacturing industries and their replacement with a downgraded manufacturing sector and high technological industries, in both of which sweatshops are mushrooming. For survival, these sweatshops or downgrading industries demand for cheap labor force. As a result, this situation necessitates and speeds up migration to the US.

In addition to the above point, as capitalism expanded outward, firms from core capitalist countries, in this case USA, enter into the developing countries like Mexico to establish assembly plants that take advantage of low wage rates, often within the export processing zones. Much of the labor demanded is female and the resulting feminization of the workforce limits opportunities for men. This paves the way for men to migrate to the US since ideological, social or political linkages has already created between USA and other developing countries.

Finally, with the rise in globalization and ease of international transportation, patterns of immigration show the role of ethnic enclaves for contributing to increased migration over time. New immigrants unintentionally lower costs for future immigration of co-ethnics by pooling together resources for themselves. Thus, by achieving mobility in the receiving country themselves, immigrants create a social structure that makes it easier for future immigrants to become upwardly mobile. According to Douglas Massey (1999), "Networks build into the migration process a self-perpetuating momentum that leads to its growth over time, in spite of fluctuating wage differentials, recessions, and increasingly restrictive immigration policies." Ethnic enclaves thus contribute to continued immigration by providing co-ethnics with a space to make connections that ultimately lower migration costs and promote economic mobility. Many worn path taken by former immigrants are made accessible to enclave members, making immigration easier to future generations. By generating further immigration, migration leads to its own cumulative causation over time. This might be the case for many countries that are in a position to choose to migrate to the USA. For example, we can notice large Chinese population in New York City or we can also see Chinatowns in Manhattan. This is the result of the established enclaves so that it can instigate migration.



Source: United Nations database, 2013

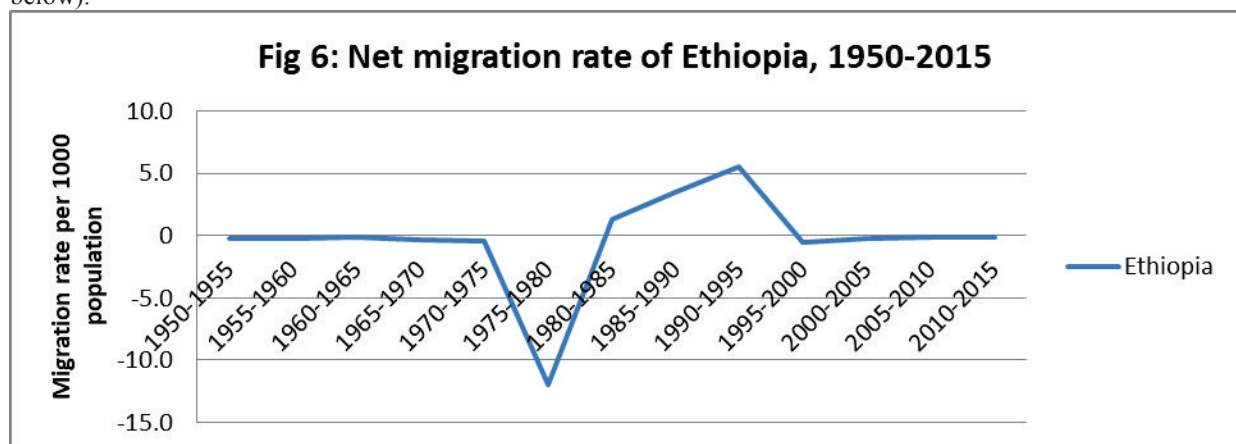
The GDP per capita of the USA as compared to the world average is very high and has increasing trend. This may invite migrants from all over the world.

### 3.4.1. Major USA Migration Network by country of Origin and Destination

While the US immigration population is diverse, just a few countries of origin make up a large share of the total. Mexico, Puerto Rico and Philippines (See Appendix C, Column A) are the three most leading countries as a migrant sending country to the US in the 1990, 2000 and 2010. And also America is sending migrants to countries such as Germany, Mexico, Canada, UK & NI and Puerto Rico (See Appendix C, Column B) because of different motives. For example, USA migration history with Mexico could be explained by world system migration theories. Because of the Americans direct foreign investment in Mexico, economic, cultural or ideological link has already established so that Americans may migrate to Mexico and make a living there or doing some other business.

### 3.5. Ethiopia

As per the net migration rate, Ethiopia has been migrants sending country to different countries. The net migration rate of the country is always negative from 1950 to 2015. The data provided tell us that the country has also been receiving migrants in the following years of interval: 1980-1985, 1985-1990, 1990-1995 (fig 6 below).



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision

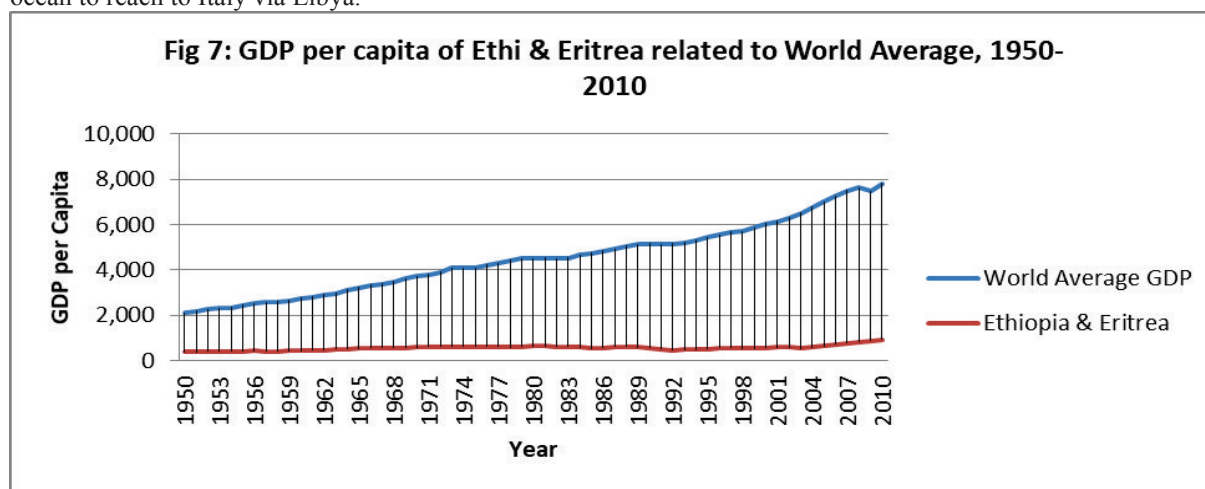
However, the data is not correctly presented because even in these years of interval so many Ethiopians were migrating to different countries because of the political unrest that Ethiopians experienced during these years. Therefore, the country should have been migrant sending country all the time from 1950 to 2015. The following are some of the evidences that disprove the figure.

For example, the Derg government eliminated its political opponents between 1975 and 1977 in response to the declaration and instigation of an Ethiopian White terror against the Derg by various opposition groups. Brutal

tactics were used by both sides, including executions, assassinations, torture and the imprisonment of tens of thousands without trial, most of whom were innocent. At the same time, the Derg faced an invasion from Somalia in 1977, which sought to annex the eastern parts of Ethiopia, which were predominantly inhabited by Somalis.

The country has experienced severe famine in the mid 1980s. As a result, thousands of people have been displaced and died. In 1991, the Derg government was finally toppled by its own officials and a coalition of rebel forces. Even after EPRDF has taken over the power, things were not fine to receive migrants for few years since they have got power through bloody war. Therefore, these historical events in Ethiopia prove that the net migration rate of Ethiopia has never been positive from 1950 to 2015.

One of the reasons for the country being migrant sending is that its GDP per capita. Fig 7 below clearly explains that Ethiopia's GDP is very low as compared to the world average so that Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. As a result, Ethiopians are migrating to different countries even through worst routes of migration-Mediterranean Ocean. Because of this many Ethiopians have died while crossing Mediterranean ocean to reach to Italy via Libya.



Source: United Nations database, 2013

Migration situation in Ethiopia can be explained by push and pull factors and other migration theories like social capital theory and cumulative causation. There are several and interrelated push factors that instigate Ethiopians to migrate to different countries. First, unemployment is one of the major factors that push people to migrate. High population pressure and the resulting shortage of arable land in rural Ethiopia is also a major factor that instigates people to take migration as one of the options to secure livelihood in foreign countries. Every time many young Ethiopian women migrating to Saudi Arabia as a domestic worker and trying to reduce the relative deprivation of their families back home. Poverty is another push factor for people to migrate. Even though they are poor, using different sources such as selling assets or loan or contribution from family and friends, most Ethiopians are migrating to different countries notably to Saudi Arabia. Third, family, friends and peer pressure is a major push factor that motivates people to migrate. In Ethiopia, there are some places that migration is a dominant culture- Example, Southern part of Ethiopia (their destination country is South Africa) through Moyale-Kenya.

Besides the push factors discussed above, there are also certain factors that attract migrants to the above mentioned destination countries of Ethiopians. First, the better economic opportunities that exist in the destination countries would be important to secure job. Second, the strong social cohesion and support system that existed among Ethiopian migrants make the migration process simple. The third reason could be receiving country's migration policy may be suitable to migrants.

Social capital migration theory is also important to explain the migration trend of Ethiopians. This theory states that '*migration networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin*' (Massey, 1999). Many Ethiopians are migrating into many countries like USA is through family linkage, the existing Ethiopian Diaspora in the USA and fake marriage. This network speeds up the migration rate to the US. Besides this formal network, there are also illegal migration network that instigate people to migrate. Illegal brokers and smugglers in Ethiopia play a huge role in expanding migration to Saudi Arabia.

Based on their role and residence, we can loosely classify brokers and traffickers into three. The first group of illegal brokers resides in different parts of the country and recruit potential migrants from villages and neighborhoods. These types of brokers do have their own occupation and do the brokering as an additional business. They have a strong link with the second type of brokers who practically arrange the journey. The



second type of brokers is those who resides in big towns and cities and receive recruited migrants from the first brokers. These groups of brokers have established networks within the country as well as neighboring countries. The last group of brokers is those who live in other countries and conduct the actual smuggling of the migrants (Asnake and Zerihun, 2015).

### 3.5.1. Major Ethiopian Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination

Ethiopia is also receiving migrants from Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan and Djibouti (See Appendix A, Column A). These are the top five countries which are sending migrants to Ethiopia. Its geographical location in the case of Sudan, South Sudan and Djibouti migrants make the migration process easy. With regard to Eritrean and Somalia, the common language, culture and ideology with the Ethiopian Tigrians and Ethiopian Somali people facilitate migration to Ethiopia. As a result of this, the country has very huge refugee camp like Shimelba, northern part of Ethiopia.

On the opposite of receiving, Ethiopia has also sending hung number of migrants to different countries, notably Israel, USA, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Sudan. For example Ethiopians are migrating to USA because of the existence of the Ethiopian Diaspora in the Unites States of America. This Diaspora serves a network that could facilitate the migration process. Net to Nigeria, Ethiopians are the second leading migrants in USA. Ethiopians are migrating to Israel because of the cultural, race, religion and ideological similarity with big community in the northern part of Ethiopia. In the Northern part of Ethiopia, there is huge Jews community so that this facilitates the process.

## 4. Conclusions

- Migration is a natural phenomenon. Even though countries are experiencing economic growth, people from these countries are migrating. This is proved by the fact that though countries do have GDP per capita above world average; they have been always sending migrants.
- Geographical proximity of countries, colonial history, cultural, social network, ideological and religious similarity can facilitate international migration process.
- The countries taken as a case study are both migrant sending and receiving. USA, Israel and Saudi Arabia are remained migrant receiving and Ethiopia and Mexico are migrants sending countries. As per the net migration, GDP per Capita and migration matrix data, these countries do have more or less different behavior that could be viewed from different migration theory perspectives. World system theories, for example, can explain the migration matrix between Mexico and USA and between Mexico and Spain (Colonialism history).
- Both push and pull theories of migration are clearly explain the migration process of Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia. In order to reduce the relative deprivation of his/her family, a person may migrate to foreign countries and the decision could also be made by his/her family, relative or the community at large.
- In most of the case study countries, the migration matrix is stable in 1990, 2000 and 2010. Therefore, from this we can understand that migration is being exercised based on the historical experiences of countries it could be religion, race, ideology or culture. Migrants are flowing into countries that can fit with history, language, religion or culture so that life would be easy in the migrant receiving countries. However, the reason why people decide to migrate can be explained by different international migration theories such as push and pull, world system and social capital.

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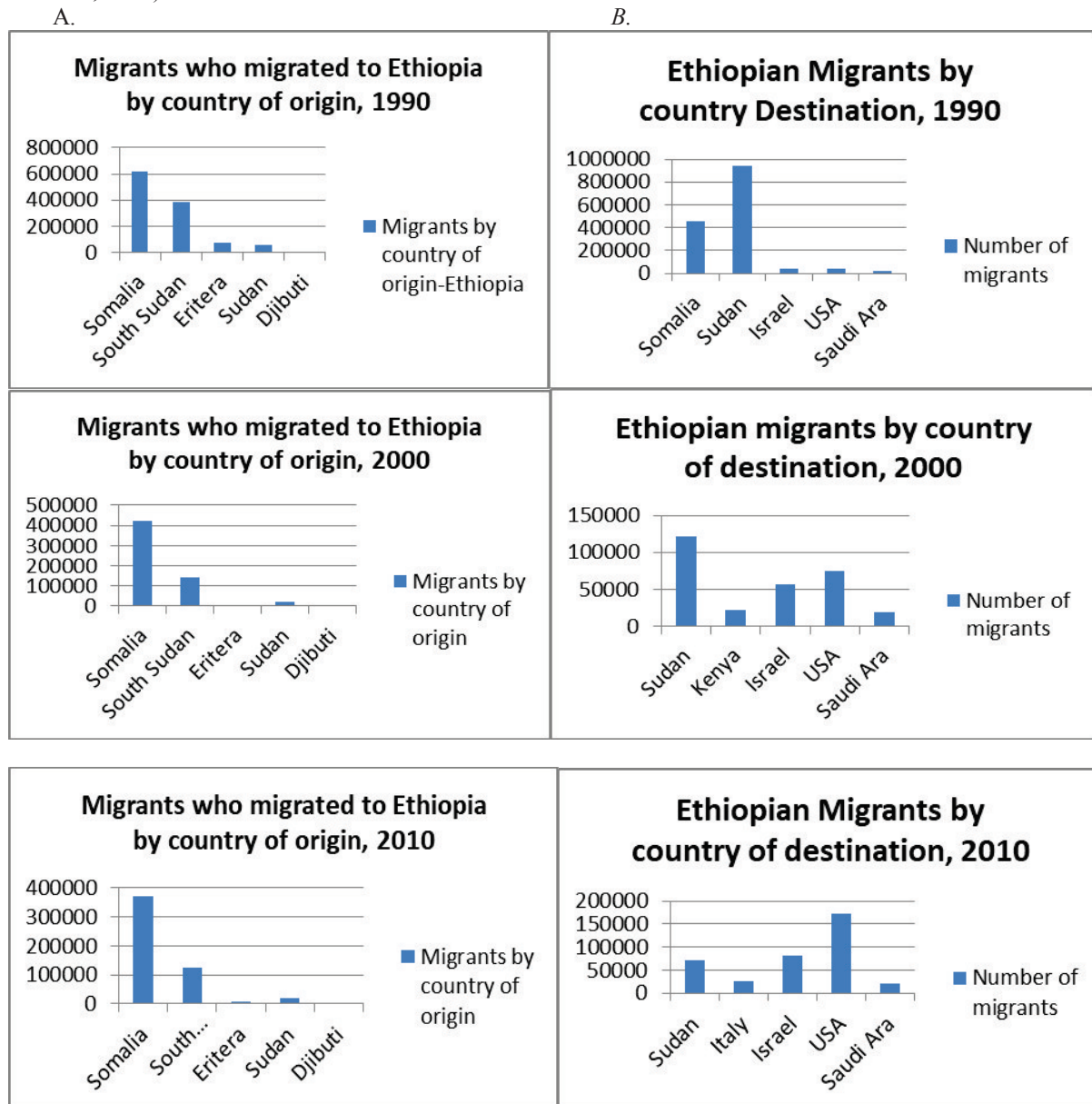
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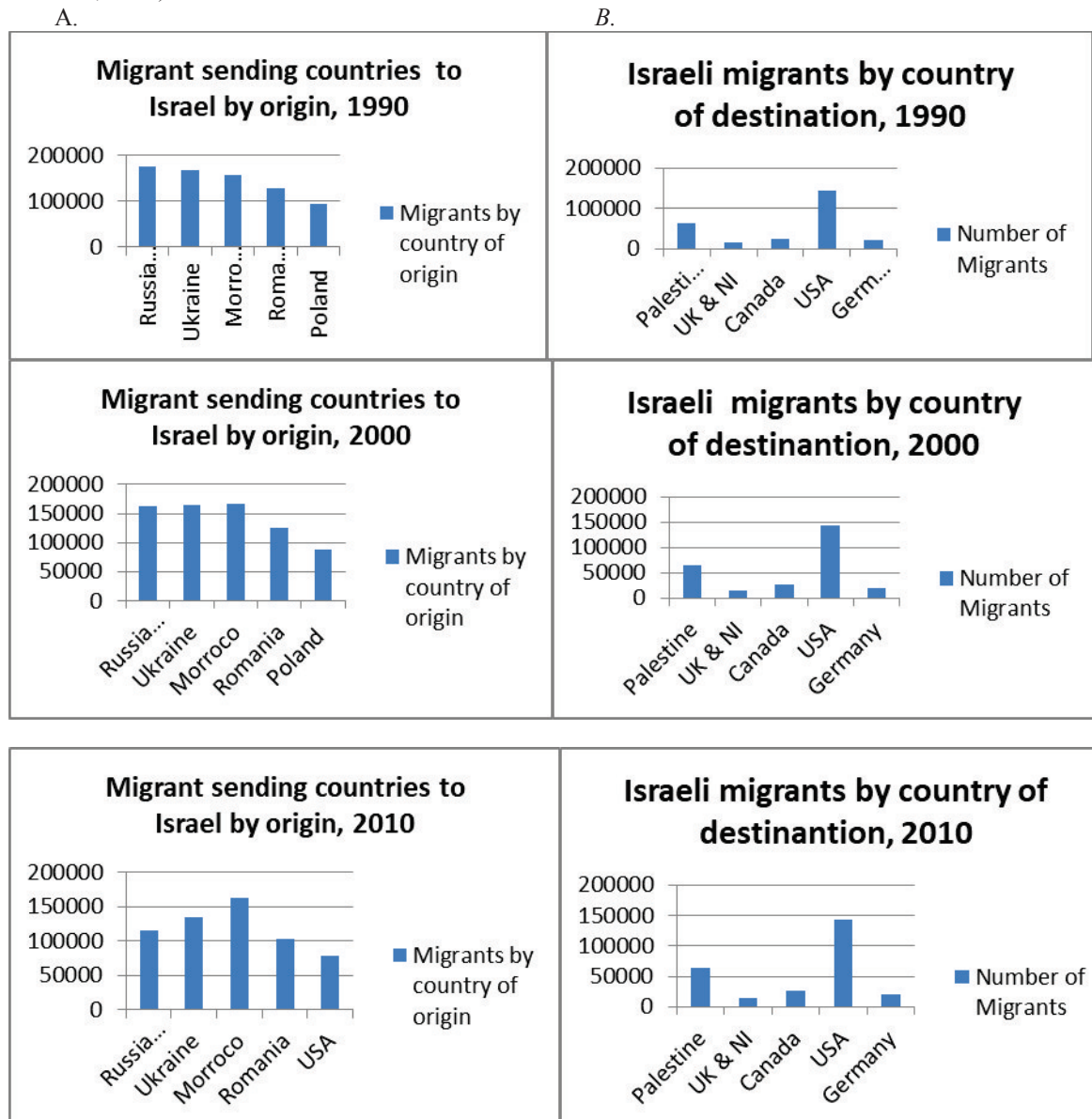
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## 6. Appendix

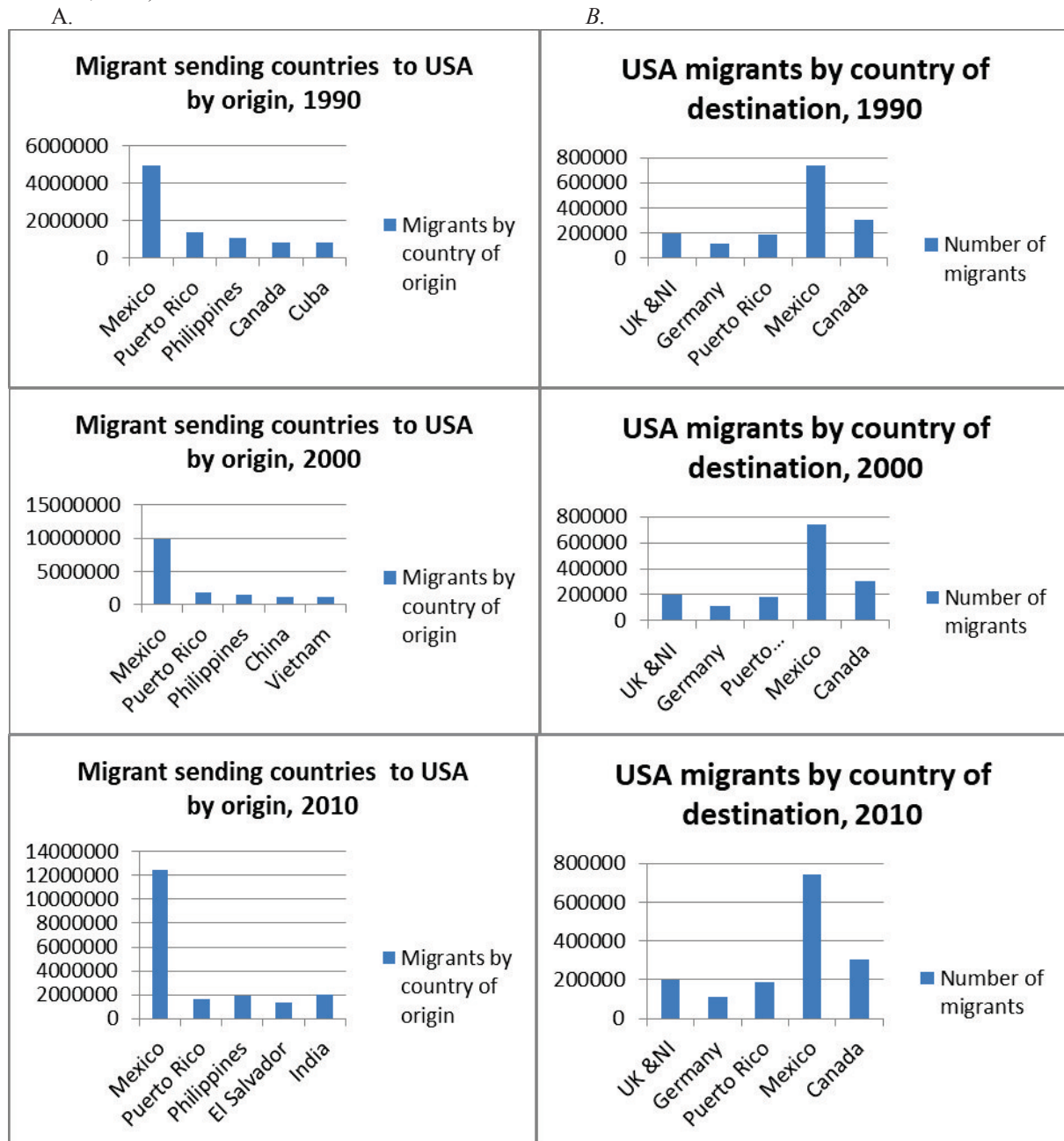
*Annex A: Major Ethiopian Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination (Source: United Nations database, 2013)*



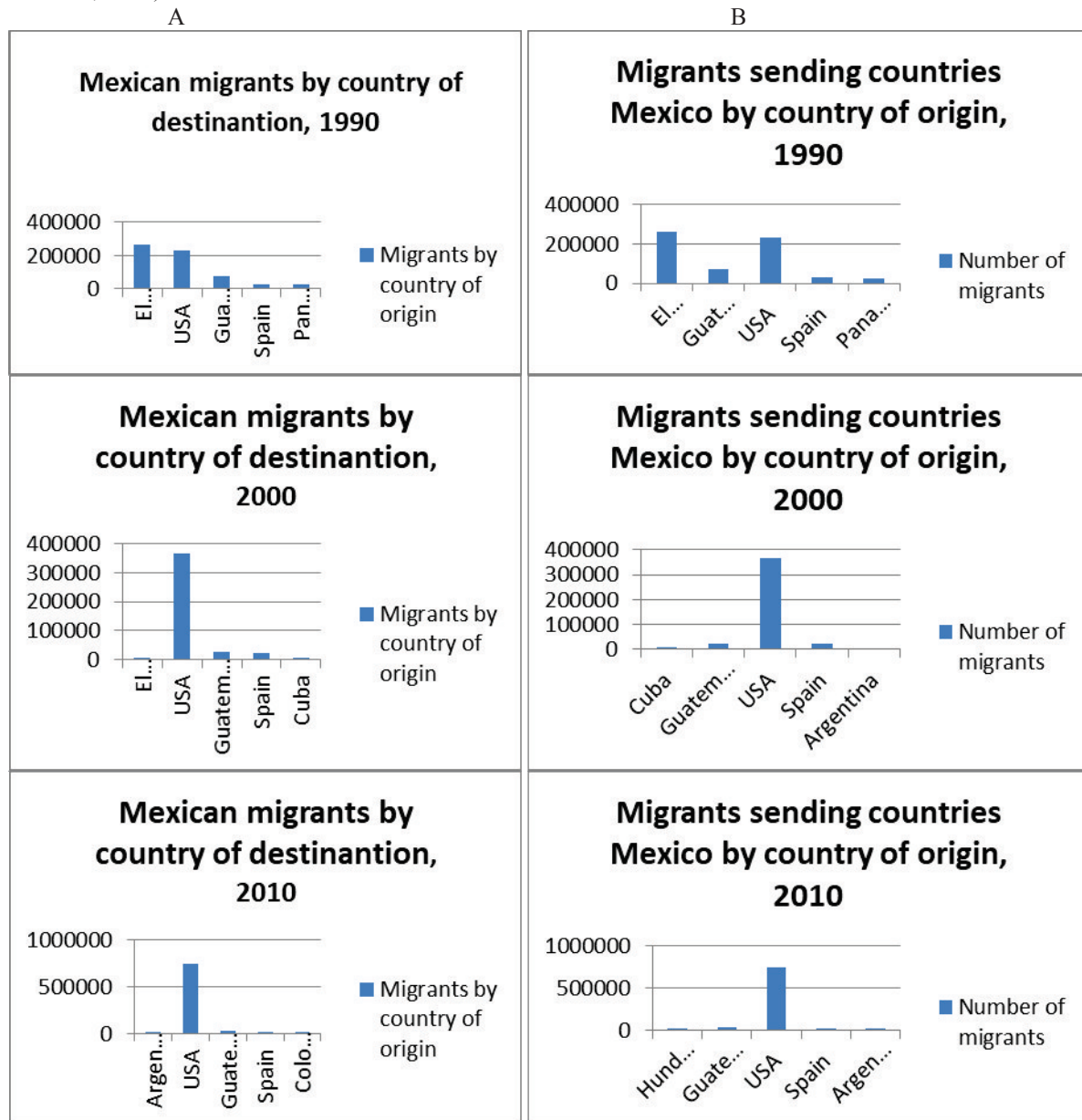
Annex B: Major Israeli Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination (Source: United Nations database, 2013)



Annex C: Major USA Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination (Source: United Nations database, 2013)



Appendix D: Major Mexican Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination (Source: United Nations database, 2013)



Appendix E: Major Saudi Arabia Migration Network by Country of Origin and Destination (Source: United Nations database, 2013)

