

Borders, independence and post-colonial ties : the role of the state in Caribbean migration

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PROPOSITIONS ACCOMPANYING THE THESIS

Borders, independence and post-colonial ties: the role of the state in Caribbean migration

by Simona Vezzoli

1. Migration policies have important effects on migration; however, rather than reducing migration volumes, migration policies can generate strong unexpected consequences on the timing, composition and destination of migration.
2. The closure of borders generates a short-term emigration peak, followed by a temporary reduction of emigration and a long-term emigration increase. Conversely, open borders do not necessarily lead to major emigration peaks or a massive growth in emigration.
3. Independence generates uncertainties and carries the potential of a strong short-term emigration peak. This, however, largely depends on the support for independence amidst the population. Conversely, non-sovereignty seems to reduce political and socio-economic uncertainties, carrying the potential for stable or even decreasing emigration.
4. The timing and sequence of independence and the establishment of a border regime generate shifts in the timing and destination of migration, and in the composition of migrant populations.
5. Post-colonial ties may shape destination preferences towards the former colonial state, but they are neither rigid nor static. Their effect is greatly influenced by the processes, timing and sequence of independence and border regime establishment as well as by migrant networks in the former colonial state and the availability of alternative destinations.
6. When studying migration patterns, it is important not only to identify events that may have had a migration effect (e.g. authoritarianism, policy reforms), but also to investigate the meaning of these events for the population within a specific historical-spatial context.

7. States may act as a 'stabiliser' of political and socio-economic conditions and reduce insecurity, particularly through the use of social welfare policies, and consequently play an important role in reducing migration aspirations.
8. Freedom of movement seems to increase short-term and circular forms of mobility and decrease permanent migration. Conversely, restrictions on mobility, including short-term travel, generate mythical views of migration, which may result in long-term migration whenever mobility is allowed.
9. Debates on open borders are undermined by the assumption that *everybody* in developing countries would migrate if given freedom of movement. However, this assumption is not based on empirical evidence. Rather, it reflects mounting uncertainties in countries of destination, particularly fears that 'poor' migrants pose a threat to a nation's public resources and its socio-cultural fabric.