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# Economic Migration: Tracing Chain Migration through Migrant Letters in an Economic Framework

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KARL DARGEL, TYLER HOERR, AND PETAR MILIJIC

The categorization of migrants in both a contemporary as well as a historical perspective continues to be a delicate matter. For 19<sup>th</sup> century migration, recent scholarship has mainly focused on concepts of agency such as chain migration or immigrant foreign relations. By analysing these ‘migrant’ concepts through a series of letters from a Württembergian family from the period, this paper engages and challenges the theoretical use of these terms for understanding transnational connections. Specifically it is argued that these concepts become more clear when limiting the categorical scope to ‘economic migration.’ As the case study shows, these migrants tended to sacrifice personal and cultural continuity in favor of material gain, which inclined them to formulate a so-called ‘second project’ by which they emphasized contact with relatives in their home country creating a mutual desire for the migration project to continue. Chain migration, as this is called, is thus contextualized in a meaningful way, contributing to a debate, largely focused on the utilitarian aspect.

## *Introduction*

In 1872, Johannes Hörr was born in Pforzheim, spending his youth moving throughout southern Germany as the son of a landless farmer. Orphaned at 13 years, he moved between several of his aunts and uncles before taking up his father’s trade. Throughout his youth, he was raised in a small anabaptist religious community. In 1889, at the age of 17, he left his home in Germany for the United States of America at the suggestion of his sister in search of economic opportunity, thus joining the global community of migrants. He set his sights on the rural Midwest, bringing with him the skills of a field worker. Additionally, connections with other families from his religious group made central Illinois an attractive destination which would provide both job opportunity and community life. Writing in his twilight years, Johannes described his first encounters in the U.S., saying he felt “welcomed by these people,” and that he “felt at home in this new country; never felt homesick.”<sup>1</sup>

Johannes’ story is one of thousands who took part in the trans-Atlantic migration from Germany to the United States during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yet his story

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Hörr (Torf-Christian), Heiðesheim, Story of the Hörr Family, July 27, 1933, copied and updated by Wilhelm Hörr 1975, unpublished.

also offers us an important insight about migration studies; categorizing migrants is difficult, to say the least. Johannes moved for economic reasons, yet he was drawn on by religious community. Unlike many of his fellow migrants, drawn to economic opportunity across the ocean, Johannes was an orphan, who leaves no record of written correspondence back to Germany after his move. If we categorize Johannes as an *economic migrant*, do we jeopardize our ability to see the diverse nature of this migrant group?

It is with this sensitivity that we begin by asking, ‘who is the *economic migrant*?’ This category has no explanatory power if not limited. For, if one contends that an economic migrant is simply ‘anyone with economic impact,’ they really are talking about all migrants, because all migrants affect economic systems. While acknowledging that all migrants have an economic potential (and affect economic structures by migrating), we refer to an *economic migrant* in this essay specifically as someone who migrates from their home country primarily due to semi-voluntary economic pressures (*push-factors*), as opposed to involuntary religious pressure, political pressure, ethnic pressure or otherwise.

As illustrated by the story of Johannes, these *economic migrants* are an extremely diverse group; while they may be unified in their reason for leaving, who they are, what they do, and where they go vary greatly.

This encourages a second question: ‘is the term *economic migrant* analytically helpful?’ As seen by the problems of diversity and unique experience—there are many ways in which this category is potentially dangerous. Despite these issues, however, there may be some aspects which are made clearer through this type of grouping. Specifically, it is possible that when speaking of transnational connections, it could be useful to employ *economic migrant* as a category. It is in this context that we make the following claim. Donna Gabaccia argues that migrants maintain their transnational connections after emigrating.<sup>2</sup> We support this argument with regard to *economic migrants*—notably in the case of German migration to the United States during the late nineteenth century—but suggest it requires further evidence to apply the same claim to non-economic migrants.

This essay will begin by discussing the historical context and economic theory which is the foundation of our research. After this, a detailed look at Garbaccia’s theory of *immigrant foreign relations*, its implications, and our own contributions will follow. Finally, a brief analysis of immigrant letters will conclude the essay as well as apply the principles discussed in the preceding sections.

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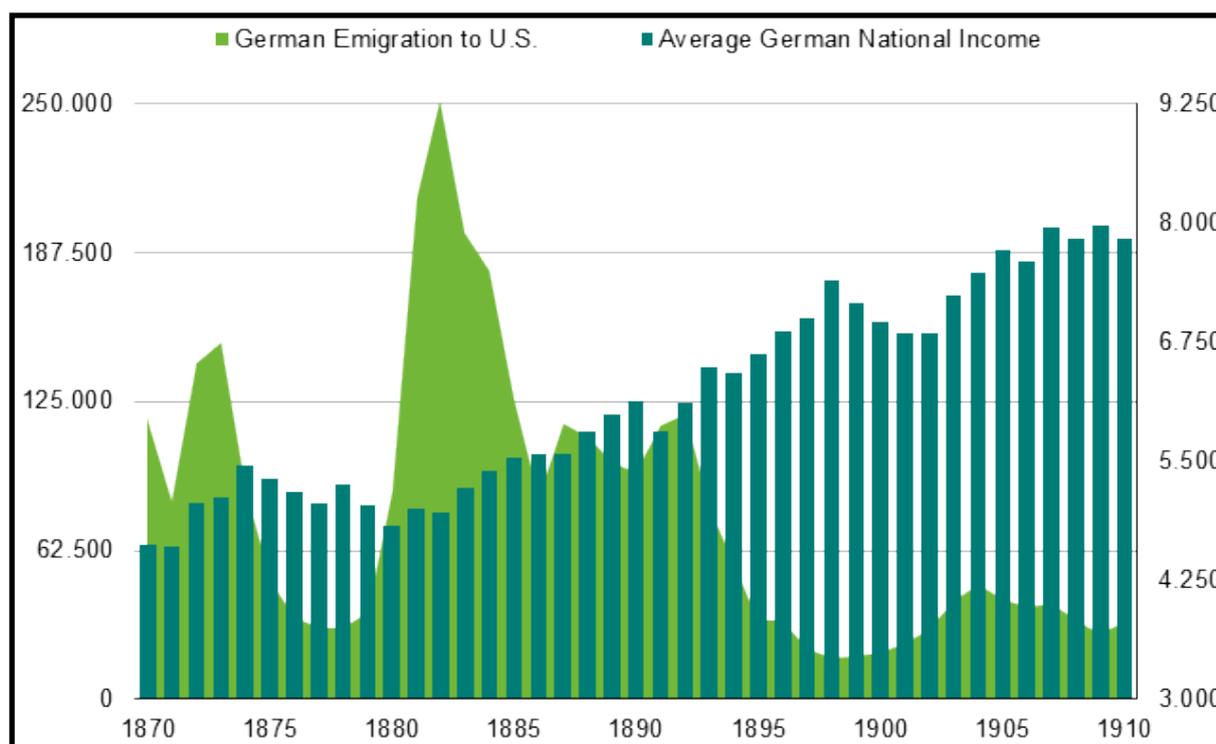
<sup>2</sup> Donna R. Gabaccia, *Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 27.

### Historical and Theoretical Context

#### Wage-gap hypothesis

Today, German-Americans are the largest ancestry group in the US, numbering around 45 million people.<sup>3</sup> From Christmas trees to hamburgers and hot-dogs, their German heritage has left a permanent mark on their adopted country and its traditions. Most of their immigrant ancestors migrated in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, roughly between 1840 and 1890, coinciding with what is called the age of mass migration—one of the largest movements of people in modern history. 60 million people moved during that time.<sup>4</sup>

There are two intuitive ways in which we usually think about migration. The first approach is to consider the fall in wages. It supposes that people migrate more when their wages in their homeland go down and stay when their wages grow. The below graph shows the interaction.

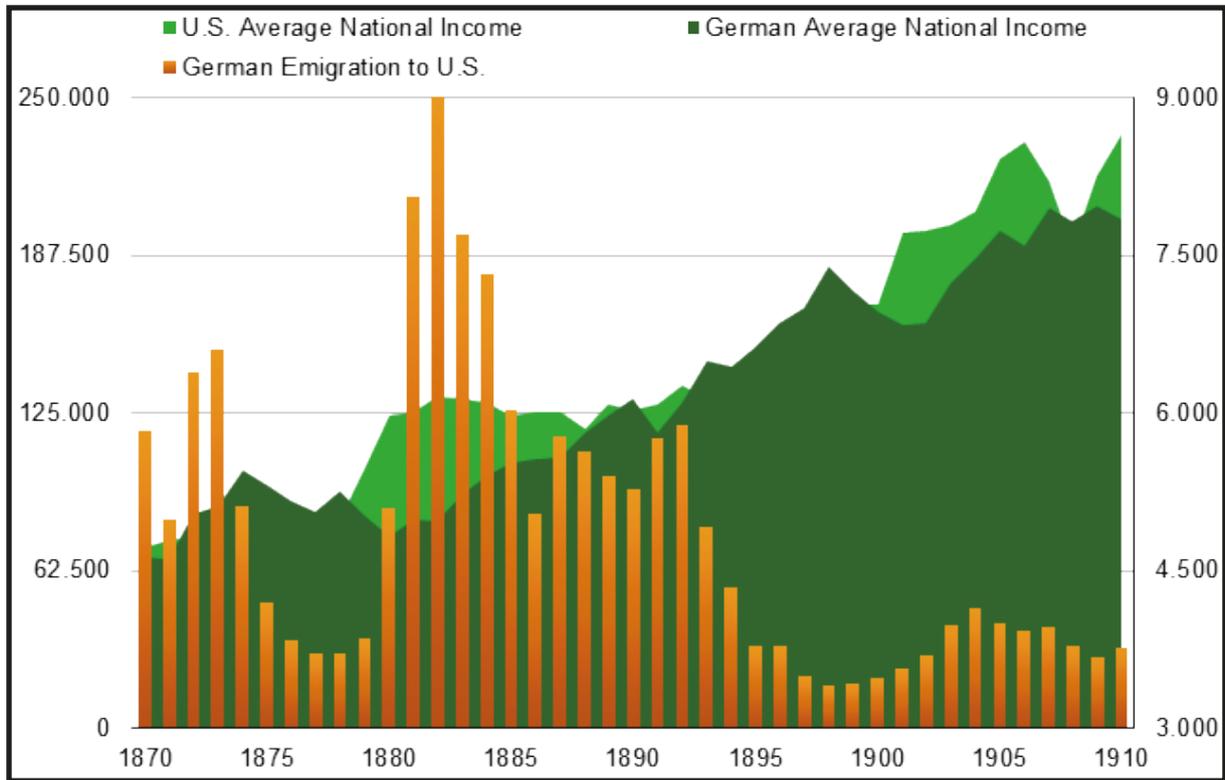


SOURCE: NATIONAL INCOME SERIES FROM WID.WORLD/DATA, IMMIGRATION NUMBERS BASED ON THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU'S HISTORICAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES: COLONIAL TIMES TO 1970, SERIES C89-119. NATIONAL INCOME (RIGHT-HAND SIDE) IN 2016 EURO, PPP ADJUSTED.

<sup>3</sup> "People reporting ancestry." 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. US Census Bureau.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalization and History*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 119.

The second correlation, the wage-gap hypothesis, is more interesting. Roughly it presumes that it is the structural, rather than short-term, gap in wages that matters. Therefore, regardless of whether there was wage convergence or divergence, whether the gap increased or decreased, it was still big. Below is a graph depicting the relationship between the wage gap and immigration numbers.



SOURCE: NATIONAL INCOME SERIES FROM WID.WORLD/DATA, IMMIGRATION NUMBERS BASED ON THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU'S *HISTORICAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES: COLONIAL TIMES TO 1970*, SERIES C89-119. NATIONAL INCOME (RIGHT-HAND SIDE) IN 2016 EURO, PPP ADJUSTED.

The correlation is visible. The spike in migration from Germany to the United States happened when the wage divergence was at its largest. Once the wages were similar, migration decreased and settled on small numbers.

Note that the indicator of living standard used above is average national income, which takes into account a multitude of factors, from wages to capital ownership to GDP. While it does provide a valuable overall picture, the wage gap itself across the Atlantic was astronomical in some sectors. An OECD paper claims real wages of building labourers in 1880 were around four times larger in Western off-shots (Canada, Australia, USA) than they were in Germany.<sup>5</sup> Out of the Western off-shots, the U.S. were the richest, so the real number might have been even higher.

<sup>5</sup> Pim de Zwart, Bas van Leeuwen, and Jieli van Leeuwen-Li, "Real Wages since 1820," in *How Was Life? Global Well-being since 1820*, ed. Jan Luiten van Zanden et al. (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2014).

*A Closer Look*

Wegge offers occupational data for emigrants from the German principality of Hesse-Cassel and crosses it with emigration numbers.<sup>6</sup>

Table 1. *Artisans and day workers, 1852–1857.*

Group	Category	Index of representation	Sample size (emigrants)
I: Wealthy, low emigration rate	Chemicals	60	74
	Mill workers	89	168
	Precious metals	77	47
	Farmers*	63–88	1,542
IV: Wealthy, high emigration rate	Traders, merchants	186	651
II: Less wealthy, high emigration rate, and skilled	Bakers, butchers	170	481
	Beer, schnapps	161	176
	Construction	123	796
	Leather, paper, shoes	149	967
	Stones/earth	130	261
	Machines	397	56
	Fine Instruments	96	26
	Non-ferrous metals	201	89
	Textiles**	121	1,355
	Transport builders	130	194
	Wood products	157	753
III: Poor, low emigration rate	Labourers/servants (all)	74	4,251
	Labourers/servants, male	85	2,602
	Labourers/servants, female	63	1,649
	Iron/Steel	85	497
	Tobacco	33	43

SOURCE: WEGGE, "OCCUPATIONAL SELF-SELECTION," 376.

The ones with the highest emigration rates were those middle-class artisans who were more skilled than they were wealthy. The old environment did not reward them properly and they had a lot to gain from the move. The wealthiest and the poorest had low emigration rates, while the middle class had the highest representation.

Why was it not the poorest who migrated most, if the wage gap was the driving force? And why such massive emigration numbers from the German Empire, one

<sup>6</sup> Simone Wegge, "Occupational Self-selection of European Emigrants: Evidence from nineteenth-century Hesse-Cassel," *European Review of Economic History* 6, no. 3 (December 2002): 376.

of the wealthiest countries in the world at the time?<sup>7</sup> The answer is transportation. Getting across the ocean in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an ordeal. The journey took months, depending on the weather, and was very expensive. So expensive, in fact, that more often than not it was a family endeavor.

It is important to note that as soon as one adds more factors to the equation, the unit of analysis becomes the household rather than the individual. This is essential for explaining another key phenomenon of economic migration, the fact that it is mostly young adult males who migrate. The model must therefore be expanded to account for these nuances. The invariable is now the travel cost, a constraint that disqualifies the poorest and makes providing for the passage a family project, also creating selection on the basis of potential human capital return (the highest in young adult males).<sup>8</sup>

The variable is the home-to-destination wage-gap. The poorer the potential migrant, the more he/she or the family or household have to gain from the move in absolute terms, thus the more likely the migration. What this means is that the myth of America as an engine of upward social mobility must be understood within these limits. To qualify for the American Dream you had to have been born in the second richest region of the world, you had to have been a well-informed, skilled young adult male with a supporting family willing and able to risk a substantial amount of money to either send you abroad first, or else being already there, willing and able to take you in.

#### *Agency: Gerber's Projects and the Typology of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Migrants*

After soldiers, immigrants produce the largest amount of letters. Gerber points out that because the letters don't seem to be very concerned with documenting the world around them, they almost resemble a project serving an end.<sup>9</sup> We can imagine that choosing a cross-oceanic migration meant leaving behind the hometown, the family, the friends, the nation, and aspects of language, religion, and tradition which are all necessary ingredients of a dignified human existence and vessels of social and personal continuity. After their primary, material goal was fulfilled, they sought to reestablish personal relationships torn apart by the migration.

Chain migration is thus not only a duty of those family members who successfully made the move as a means of giving back to the household that enabled them to move in the first place, but also a desire to achieve or repair a sense of community.

<sup>7</sup> Bolt et al., 2018, "Rebasing 'Maddison': New Income Comparisons and the Shape of long-run Economic Development," Maddison Project Database, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Oded Stark and J. Edward Taylor, "Relative Deprivation and International Migration," *Demography* 26, no. 1 (February 1989): 13.

<sup>9</sup> Walter D. Kamphoefner, "Immigrant Epistolary and Epistemology: On the Motivators and Mentality of Nineteenth-Century German Immigrants," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 34.

*Historiography and Argument**Donna Gabaccia's "Immigrant Foreign Relations"*

In 2012, Donna Gabaccia published her book, *Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective*, as part of the "America in the World" series, edited by Sven Beckert and Jeremi Suri. In it, Gabaccia described in detail a concept she calls immigrant foreign relations, which outlines the web of connection between immigrant populations and their home countries, often leading to chain-migrations and continued involvement in international politics.<sup>10</sup> For Gabaccia, immigrant foreign relations had a profound impact on American foreign politics, yet this connection has been largely ignored both within contemporary conversation and the historical discipline.<sup>11</sup>

In her book Gabaccia attempted to bridge a gap between diplomatic and immigration historians,<sup>12</sup> however our aim in this essay is to narrow the focus to the immigration side of her argument, namely, that migrants (in general) maintain foreign relations, or *transnational connections* after they've moved abroad. Research into transnational German *economic migrants* to the United States in the late nineteenth century supports this claim by Gabaccia.<sup>13</sup> This however, does not come as a surprise, as much of the evidence used in the book refers to examples of what we would classify as *economic migrants*. An easy critique of her broad claim arises when looking at examples of forced migration, where actors tended to be forced into migration as single units, severing ties with their homeland. Thus, we argue that applying this principle to all migrants requires further evidence, and may or may not be tenable.

*The Conceptual Use of 'Economic Migrants'*

One of the reasons *economic migrants* provides a good category in which to see these transnational connections circles back to the idea of *secondary projects*. *Economic migrants*, in their *second project* often keep personal contact with their friends and family back home, leading to long-term *chain migration*. A second, and very important part of this, however, is the semi-voluntary nature of *economic migration*. This idea is theoretical, but worth mentioning, as it moves the categorization away from *push* and *pull factors*, toward immigrant experience.

<sup>10</sup> Gabaccia, *Foreign Relations*, 2, 27.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>13</sup> Gabaccia's Chang family used throughout the introduction of her book is a good comparison. While there are mentions of what might be considered 'political migrants' in the book, these are often more complicated stories to categorize. Some of these migrants (such as the ones found in Gabaccia's book) may also fit the conclusions of this argument, but their reasoning is often more sporadic than is found with economic migration, and thus, difficult to apply such an argument wholesale.

We place *economic migrants* into a semi-voluntary category, since they possess more agency in their decision to leave home, and in where to go. Importantly, because of the uneven effect of economic migration on families (meaning, they do not move as a ‘community’ or large group), economic migrants naturally have longer-term chain migration. Migrant groups who have been forced into migration, like group migrations stimulated by religious and political persecution, are more likely to move in larger groups, as entire families. Thus, while there may be shorter-term examples of chain-migration, they are more likely to move together, and leave the country which ejected them behind.

Of course, all migrants are shaped by their circumstances, and the lines of categorization are somewhat blurry. One might protest that all migrants are economic—even religious or political ‘refugees.’ Similarly, extreme poverty could also be seen as an involuntary stimulus for migration akin to these other types of ‘forced’ migration. However, these issues can be helped by a clear definition of *economic migrant*, understanding motivations before and after migration (as explained by *primary* and *secondary projects*) and noting the distinction between a migrant being pushed out of their home nation by hegemonic groups and economic migrants deciding to leave in most cases because of economic hardship (though often not extreme poverty, as the travel costs would have prevented such migration in many cases).

### *Analytical Section*

#### *Working with Letters as a Unit of Analysis*

Working with our tentative category of an economic migrant, the task at hand is to retrace these immigrant foreign relations as they were established and maintained. As social ties and webs of connections are bound to the lifetime of the ones who invested in them, they may become intangible to those who come after.

Yet, some sources are written evidence of these foreign relations. More specifically, (German) migrants frequently sent an abundance of letters back to their country of origin, often to their family and friends. These letters will form the basis for the unit of analysis, enabling us to closely examine the interdependencies between immigrant foreign relations, chain migration, and “German immigrants writing home.”<sup>14</sup>

An outstanding publication in this context is Helbich’s et al. *Briefe aus Amerika: Deutsche Auswanderer schreiben aus der Neuen Welt 1830–1930*. Bundling twenty series of letters, broadly categorized into farmers, workers, domestic servants, the authors attempt to categorize these migrants along the lines of age,

<sup>14</sup> *News from the Land of Freedom: German Migrants Write Home* is the English title of Helbich, Kamphoefner, and Sommer’s book *Briefe aus Amerika: Deutsche Auswanderer schreiben aus der Neuen Welt 1830–1930* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988).

gender, family status, confession, occupation, region of origin, and their place of settlement.<sup>15</sup> However, their work does not claim representativeness in a statistical sense, as it merely deals with a selection taken from the *Bochumer Auswandererbriefsammlung*<sup>16</sup> which accounts for roughly 0.0018 per cent of the estimated 280 million letters that were written from the United States to Germany between 1820 and 1914.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike other databases that provide written accounts of migrants,<sup>18</sup> the letters presented by Helbich et al. are backed up by crucial additional information that allow for an insight into the ties the migrants maintained with their former home.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, all case studies deal precisely with what we have defined as an economic migrant.

Before we conduct a close analysis of some of these letters, it is important to stress the limitations of said sources. For one, there is the very subjective, at times even ‘propagandistic,’ nature of letters, which is especially true when the letters intend to convince other family members to embark on the journey to the United States.

While this fact alone might not diminish the value of letters as proof of chain migration, a more specific case can be made for the letters that these migrants have sent home. Leaving for a new life on a different continent, not all might have successfully reached their destination, thus never being able to write letters at all. One might refer to this issue as *survivor bias*.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, for every migrant establishing contact with his home country, there is an unknown number that are part of the silent, or rather illiterate, migrants that never did so. As mentioned earlier, however, it was by and large the middle-class who migrated, often with some basic education and writing skills.<sup>21</sup> To put it in the words of American poetess Emma Lazarus and her famous poem “New Colossus,” these letters are not the work of “Europe’s Tired, Poor, Huddled Masses.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 36. Unless specified otherwise, all translations are by the author.

<sup>16</sup> Over the past thirty years, this database has grown from 5,000 to 7,000 letters. <http://www.auswandererbriefe.de>, accessed, March 11, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> For more details on exact numbers, estimates, and calculations of the authors, see: Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 31–33.

<sup>18</sup> Another project, run by the University of Chicago, is for instance: *North American Immigrant Letters, Diaries and Oral Histories*, <https://imld.alexanderstreet.com/>, accessed March 13, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 39.

<sup>20</sup> P. Moles and N. Terry, s.v. “Survivor Bias,” *The Handbook of International Financial Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 534.

<sup>21</sup> Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 36. Literacy tests for migrants were only introduced with the Immigration Act of 1917.

<sup>22</sup> The line quoted also served as the title for Abramitzky, Boustan, and Eriksson’s study on “Self-Selection and Economic Outcomes in the Age of Mass Migration,” *American Economic Review* 102, no. 5 (2012): 1832–1856. In their study, Abramitzky et al. analyze whether “the United States acquired wealthier and higher-skilled European migrants who were

*The Klinger Family: 34 Years of Economic Migration*

Bearing all these things in mind, we will now turn to the small municipality of Korb, near Stuttgart. In the year 1848, the situation for the rural lower class in the predominantly agricultural Kingdom of Württemberg was dire. Anna Maria Klinger, the oldest daughter of impoverished wine maker Eberhard Ludwig and his wife Barbara requested the authorities of the Kingdom of Württemberg to emigrate to North America.<sup>23</sup> On March 18, 1849, she sent the first letter from “New York”<sup>24</sup> back home, initiating a correspondence that would last for more than a generation well into 1883. Since this exchange of letters includes more than thirty letters and a number of different authors, only a few ‘highlights’ can be taken into account here.

On the day of her arrival, Klinger was employed by a German family, earning twelve times more than what she would have received in Germany.<sup>25</sup> Critically evaluating her current position, she noted that “no one really likes it at first and especially if you are so lonely and forlorn in a foreign country like I am, with no friend or relative around me.”<sup>26</sup> Yet, she remained in good spirits, knowing that learning English would help to significantly improve her situation. Apart from an account of her arduous journey and some information on New York, she stated how much better it would be in America for her family, especially for her brothers. Already in her first letter, Klinger began to work on her *second project*, by not only reporting back to her family but also actively encouraging them to join her.

Roughly one year later, a second letter from New York arrived. We learn that Anna Maria is no longer without “friend or relative” and now signs her correspondence with Anna Maria Schano, née Klinger.<sup>27</sup> Between these two letters, she married Franz Schano, a Bavarian soldier who deserted while on leave and immigrated with his father and brother to America.<sup>28</sup> Franz Schano took the opportunity to write his in-laws in great detail sometime in 1850.<sup>29</sup> However, this investment is not about introducing himself—as he most likely never met his in-laws in person—but rather was sorting out which member of the Klinger family should follow next.

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able to finance the voyage, or whether it absorbed Europe’s “tired, poor, huddled masses’ who migrated in search for opportunity” (p.1833).

<sup>23</sup> Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 500–502.

<sup>24</sup> While she was literate, her writing is heavily influenced by her local dialect, as unfamiliar words are often written the way she must have perceived them. Other examples include “Blümuth” (Plymouth) or “Viladelfe” (Philadelphia), see: *Ibid.*, 505.

<sup>25</sup> Her monthly salary was four Dollars, which equals ten guilders, a sum she would have made in an entire year in Württemberg, see: *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, the beginning of the second letter, and hence the exact date, is missing. But from census records we learn that Anne Maria Klinger and Franz Schano had married by July 1850.

<sup>28</sup> Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 514.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 507–509.

Anna Maria was informed by her parents that her brother Daniel, who was willing to immigrate, lacked the financial resources to do so.<sup>30</sup> Franz and Anne Marie suggested that in this case it would be better if the two younger Klinger sisters, Barbara and Katharina, “came first because for them we can find more work than they would like within the first days.”<sup>31</sup> In return, this money then could be used to pay for Daniel’s journey who would have started an apprenticeship under Franz.<sup>32</sup> After receiving detailed instructions, Barbara Klinger arrived in the Schano household on June 14, 1851, and after a year she paid off the passage money.<sup>33</sup>

The proposal made by Franz and Anna Maria to reunite the whole Klinger family in America (and bear the financial brunt if necessary) was rejected by the father.<sup>34</sup> Instead, two of Anna Maria’s younger siblings, Katharina and later Gottlieb, migrated to New York. By September 1852, three Klinger family members found their way to the United States. On strictly economic grounds, it was decided that Daniel’s journey would be postponed until the summer of 1857.<sup>35</sup>

After the death of the mother in 1858—mourned on both sides of the Atlantic—Rosina Klinger decided to leave too, and by March 1859 six of Eberhard Klinger’s children were living in the U.S.<sup>36</sup>

Having finished their *second project*, the letters became more and more sparse, with longer breaks between 1863 and 1868<sup>37</sup> and complete silence from 1868 until 1882. In his last letter to the remaining siblings back home, Gottlieb Klinger, who had become the leading voice of the American part of the Klinger family, summed up the aftermath of the Klinger migration: Daniel, “it seems, has not much longer to live”; Barbara lived on a well-doing farm with “seven well-behaved Christian children”; Marie, twice widowed, had lost her only son at 25 years but was financially doing well; Katharina, “well off,” lived with her second husband in New York, and “of Rosina I can’t tell much, she lives in New York and has a bunch of kids.”<sup>38</sup>

In itself, the immigration history of the Klinger family is a typical case of German migration to the United States that occurred millions of times. These letters however, show the direct connection between exchange of knowledge through immigrant foreign relations and successful *chain migration*. Beyond that, these relations are crucial in enabling chain migration. Once a family member has es-

<sup>30</sup> Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 506.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 508.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 513.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 520: “if this is too you wish and will, we have decided to whatever you can pay add fifty dollar to bring mother father and the three siblings here.” Schano even considers to collect funds from the local community.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 521.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 525.

<sup>37</sup> The American Civil War certainly played into that as well.

<sup>38</sup> Helbich et al., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 532.

established a bridgehead in the new country, other family members—mainly the younger sister as we have seen—could follow.

Nevertheless, the pivotal role of the family in these *foreign relations* did not end as soon as all eligible family members had crossed the Atlantic. Rather, these networks extended to North America, spanning from New York, to Albany, Mishawaka, or even Canada.<sup>39</sup>

Above all, this emphasizes that migrant letters were not simply a small peripheral phenomenon, but rather a ubiquitous important means of keeping up foreign relations. They shed light on the extremely diverse group we here have called *economic migrants*. Ultimately, *economic migrant* can be successfully employed as a category in understanding the intertwined relations between *immigrant foreign relations* and *chain migration*.

### Conclusion

This essay has considered the usefulness of the analytical category *economic migrant*, by modifying Donna Garbaccia's theory of immigrant foreign relations. As with any categorical limitation, there are a number of problems which arise when attempting to group migrants into an economic framework. However, as our theoretical and analytical discussions have shown, using *economic migration* as a lens through which to see *immigrant foreign relations* and the associated chain-migration can prove to be insightful.

In the first part of our essay, we discussed the economic and theoretical context of our discussion. After this, a discussion of Donna Gabaccia's theory of *immigrant foreign relations* led us to our argument that *economic migrants*, in particular, maintain transnational connections after moving abroad. Finally, the final section offered a simple application of our discussion through the letters of the Klinger family.

We believe these questions of categorization, and the usefulness of analytical concepts like *economic migrant*, highlight the importance of continuing discourse within our discipline on how to understand our historical actors.

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<sup>39</sup> Gottlieb, Anna Marie, and Daniel lived in Albany, Barbara in Mishawaka, Indiana, and Rosine at least temporarily in Canada.